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## CONNECTICUT COMMON SCHOOL JOURNAL.

### VOLUME III.

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## RETURNS FROM SCHOOL VISITETS FOR 1840-41.

The legislature of 1840 having requested the Board of Commissioners of Common Schools to prepare a revised draft of the laws relative to schools, with such modifications as they may deem expedient, the Board have concluded to dispense with the statistical returns heretofore required of school visitors, respecting the condition of each district, and to invite them to communicate their views in a series of connected remarks on some or all of the material points in the organization and administration of our school system with which they are practically acquainted. The Board are anxious to act in the business required of them, with the light and experience of men who have been familiar with the details of the subject as teachers, school committees, or visitors, for years. A circular embracing the topics, on which the visitors will be requested to communicate any facts or suggestions, warranted by their knowledge of the schools in their several societies, will be forwarded in the course of the present month. In the mean time their attention is invited to the contents of this number of the Journal as containing many valuable suggestions on topics which will afterwards be called upon to discuss.

## LAST EXAMINATION OF THE WINTER SCHOOLS.

The proper examination of the schools settles far-reaching questions. A season has passed; has any harvest been gathered? Adult age approaches; is there any better preparation, than before, for the performance of all its duties? Perhaps intellectual qualifications have been increased in the school; but are moral resolutions invigorated also?

An examination of the school, in order to determine the proficiency of the scholars, involves many important particulars. It is a test-operation. The committee, having visited the school at its opening, are supposed to know substantially its state and condition, at that time. They are now to compare the present condition with the former, to learn whether it has been stationary, retrograding or advancing. This is a serious adjudication for all parties. Correct decisions, always valuable, are immensely so here. If the teacher have done his duty, he will be justified by his works. If the scholars have done theirs, they can exhibit the proofs. If some, through diligence and perseverance, have accomplished much, while others have been slothful, the hour has now come, when, for the sake of justice, for the sake of the future character of each, the good should be rewarded by an exhibition of their attainments, and the delinquent punished by an exposure of their ignorance. The proceeding reaches further, than a simple award of deserts, to the meritorious and the negligent;—it is prospective, as well as retrospective; it goes to strengthen or impair the faith of young minds, in the impartiality and the integrity of their judges; it serves to stimulate or to discourage exertion, to cultivate or to deaden the love of excellence.

But let us see, how the respective parties—the school committee, the teacher, the pupils—stand in relation to this judicial proceeding. The school committee may be supposed perfectly impartial. No bias, no preconception, for or against any child, is to give a single vibration to the balance of justice, they hold in their hands. No ties of friendship, blood, affinity, on one side; no aversion to, no wrong suffered from, any parent, on the other, is to swerve their minds from the line of rectitude.

The teacher, too, may be supposed to be upright and conscientious, but he stands upon ground which slopes downwards towards temptation. He has the natural desire, common to all men, to be commended. Perhaps, his continuance at the head of the school for a longer period, or his re-engagement for another season, or his prospect of obtaining a more lucrative school, may be dependent upon the favorable impressions, now made. All amiable motives, too, co-operate with selfish ones. He wishes the scholars to sustain the ordeal, in such a manner, as to make the event a happy spot in their memory. Parents, with anxious looks, are present, and he sympathizes with their gratification, when the children acquit themselves honorably. Even should the teacher feel unkindly towards each individual scholar in the school, he will still desire to have the school appear well at the examination. Many a pious fraud has been committed, under a far feebler stress of temptation.

But how is it with the pupils?—the young Washingtons, or the young Arnolds. Anxiously have they been looking forward to this day of trial; to this day of triumph or of defeat. Hope, fear, have made it present to their minds, before its arrival. In imagination, they have gone through with it a hundred times, and trembled or rejoiced at the fancied result. Many of them experience emotions, as keen as those which urge on contending politicians or contending sovereigns.

The teacher, then, from motives inseparable from his position, being anxious to have the pupils appear well, and the pupils themselves, striving to win distinction and to avert disgrace;—by whom ought the examination to be conducted? If it is left to the interested parties, may there not be danger,—we will not say of collusion—but of special preparation upon particular tables, pages, chapters;—danger, indeed, of hav-

ing the windiness of a word exhibition? To use a trader's phrase, may not the samples offered, be better than the lots? Every temptation is on that side, and therefore, every counterpoise should be on the other. *As far as possible, then, the committees should take the examination into their own hands.*

It is impossible adequately to measure or compute the difference in the practical results of a pupil's labor, during the school, according as he studies merely from the motive of appearing well in his recitations, or, as he studies with a desire to comprehend and master the subject of his lessons. If he study simply for the hour of recitation, or for the day of exhibition, then his mind will dwell perpetually upon the circumstances of those events. He will look forward to the tests to be there applied. Whatever promises to favor success at that tribunal, however valueless, will engross him. What will not increase his chances of it, however useful, will be discarded. If a lesson is studied, simply for the recitation's sake, it will be forgotten, when the recitation is over. The object is then accomplished. But if studied for its own sake, and with reference to the actual business of life, then it will be studied with a constant eye to the future, and the mind will not relinquish its hold upon it, at the moment when the examination closes. It will be retained for its supposed intrinsic value, and because the time has not yet arrived to apply it to its proper object. It has been remarked a thousand times, that the students in college, *who study for the recitation's sake*, turn out ordinary men in after-life. They load and unload their minds, so many times a day, as a laborer does his wheelbarrow, and with as little improvement of the vehicle in the former case as in the latter.

At the very opening of the schools, therefore, the committee ought to apprise both teacher and scholars, that the latter will be liable to examination by them, anywhere and everywhere, upon the studies pursued:—that they will be examined, not so much on the books used, as on the branches taught. As soon as this is proclaimed, the whole apparatus of books and implements, will be converted, in a twinkling, from ends to means. The pupils will study to *know*, instead of to *remember*; they will strive to lay up and retain their knowledge for practical uses, instead of carrying it to the recitation, to be there repeated and forgotten. The teacher and pupil will then unitedly strive to obtain facts, to discover principles, and to connect knowledge with the actual occurrences of life and the business of men. This will turn the mind's eye of both in a different direction and fix it upon a different object,—a useful and an available one,—during the whole school.

Above all, let the committee beware of recitations in grammar, in arithmetic, and in geography, from memory merely. Orthography and certain tables in arithmetic belong to memory. But the moment geography is mentioned, the earth, as it exists and revolves in space, should start up before the eye of the mind as round and as distinct, as though it were an apple suspended by a string, before the eye of the body. The mind may be trained to see the former, as clearly as the natural organ does the latter. When any city, mountain, river, is mentioned, there should be a distinct conception of its place upon this round body, the globe.

What are called *memoriter* recitations are very apt to be betrayed by a certain glibness of manner. Children can generally speak faster than they can select and arrange thoughts, but not so fast as they can remember words. A *memoriter* recitation, on subjects to which it is not appropriate, is very strong presumptive evidence, that the lesson is not understood. Let all such instances be carefully scrutinized. Cases, involving similar principles, under different forms, may be put as tests. If the pupil have grasped the principle, he can probably apply it to an analogous case. If he cannot do this, be assured he has learned only a fact;—and a fact which, perhaps, may never come under his own observation,—instead of mastering a principle, explanatory of whole classes of facts. The judgment and good sense which make distinguished men, consist mainly, in the power of applying familiar principles to new combinations of facts. The cultivation of this talent should be commenced in the school room; and nothing will conduce so much to its advancement, as to apprise the children, that they are to be examined, not so much on certain facts which their minds may contain, as on the mental operations they are able to perform.—*Mass. Common School Journal.*

## RECENT SCHOOL DOCUMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS RELATING TO EDUCATION.

We resume in this number our notices of such recent documents and publications as have come into our possession, and by copious extracts shall aim to disseminate a knowledge of their most valuable suggestions. The great object we have had in view, in conducting this paper has been not so much to spread abroad new views of our own, as to give wider circulation to the best views already before the public. The official documents of other states relative to schools and education generally, have of necessity but a limited circulation with us, in their original form.

### Abstract of Massachusetts School Returns for 1840-41.

#### Continued from No. 3.

Before enriching our columns with extracts from the report, of the school committees on several important points, we will present some tabular statements, which are highly creditable to the towns specified and to the state.

Towns.	Population.	Children over 4 and under 16.	Attendance in Public Schools.	Average daily attendance.	Average wages per month for Male Teacher.	Amount raised by tax for Teachers and Fuel.
Boston,	80325	18000	10760	8871	\$104.55	\$96458
Chelsea,	1659	546	435	350	40.33	2700
Danvers,	4804	1191	800	550	22.81	3000
Lynn,	9323	2451	1606	963	37.63	5000
Cambridge,	7631	2005	1093	805	61.46	6609
Concord,	2023	532	499	397	32.14	2000
Frammingham,	2881	794	612	476	31.72	2105
Lexington,	1622	415	379	296	34.12	1400
Lowell,	18010	3995	2818	2033	32.72	14577
Malden,	2303	668	605	367	37.83	2500
Salem,	14985	3756	1673	1309	61.65	10825
Worcester,	7117	1900	1488	1159	38.58	7600
Northampton,	3576	894	933	720		3705
South Hadley,	1400	397	361	290	26.50	1000
Springfield,	9234	2247	1619	1485	30.00	6221
Brookline,	1083	237	171	133	35.00	1050
Roxbury,	7493	1807	1183	879	64.72	6370
New Bedford,	11304	2707	1445	1144	49.66	11600
Hingham,	3415	959	669	451	33.00	2742
Plymouth,	5134	1422	1165	831	31.10	5000
Scituate,	3754	1064	1022	765	30.00	3000
Nantucket,	9048	1822	1080	993	69.58	7000
Charlestown,	10101	2470	2218	1831	52.86	11133

#### Aggregate of Returns for the State.

Number of towns,	307
Number which made returns,	301
Population, (May 1, 1807.)	696,197
Number of public schools,	3,072
Number of persons between 4 and 16 years of age,	179,268
Number of scholars of all ages in all the schools,	{ Summer, 124,354 { Winter, 149,222
Average attendance in the schools,	{ Summer, 92,698 { Winter, 111,844
Average length of schools,	7 months and 10 days.
Average wages per month including board,	{ Males, \$24.14 { Females, \$12.75
Amount of money raised by taxes for the support of schools including only the wages of teachers, board and fuel,	\$477,221.24
Amount of board and fuel contributed,	\$37,269.74
Average number of scholars in incorporated academies,	3,701
Aggregate paid for tuition,	\$57,458.59
Average number of scholars in unincorporated private schools,	28,635
Aggregate paid for tuition,	\$241,114.20
Aggregate amount paid for schools public and private,	\$828,334.66

The income of the school fund, (capital \$437,592.20) amounting to \$21,000 does not appear in the aggregate given by Mr. Mann. This sum is apportioned to the different towns, on condition that the requisitions of the school law are complied with, and a sum

equal to \$1.25 for each person between the ages of 4 and 16 is raised by tax for the support of schools, including only the wages and board of teachers, and fuel. By referring to the returns for each town, it appears that all but six raised the sum required by law, and that most of them raised voluntarily a larger sum. According to a writer in the *North American Review*, one hundred and seven raised more than twice the amount required, and many, more than three times the amount.

17	raised between	\$1.25 and	\$1.50
82	"	"	1.50 " 2.00
82	"	"	2.00 " 2.50
50	"	"	2.50 " 3.00
44	"	"	3.00 " 4.00
13	"	"	4.00 " 5.00

4, viz. Boston, Chelsea, Medford, and Milton, over \$5.00.

There are several very encouraging facts, shown by the aggregate of these returns, compared with those of the preceding year. Three additional towns have sent returns, with an additional population of less than seven hundred. The number of male teachers has diminished from 2,411 to 2,378, that is, by 33; while the number of female teachers has increased by 103; viz. from 3,825 to 3,928. The average wages, paid per month, to males have risen from \$31.90 to \$33.08, viz. \$1.19 per month. Those of female teachers have risen from \$12.32 to \$12.75, viz. \$0.43 per month, and when it is considered, that, during that time, the wages in Boston and most of the larger towns have continued nearly the same, and that two of the counties have made no change, a very favorable one is indicated in the smaller towns elsewhere.

The average of the time of keeping schools has increased from seven months and four days, to seven months and ten days, a full week for each school in the state.

The amount raised by taxes, &c., has increased from \$447,859 to \$477,221; and the amount contributed, from \$31,934 to 37,269; while the aggregate paid for the tuition of private schools and academies has diminished nearly in an equal rate, from \$270,462 to \$241,114.

The whole amount raised or contributed for the support of public schools has increased from \$479,744 to \$514,490.

The whole amount paid for schools, public and private, has increased from \$817,217.21 to \$838,334.66.

We shall now proceed to make extracts from the reports of the school committees on several important subjects, which we commend to the careful consideration of school visitors, and of all interested in improving our own schools. Copious as these extracts are, they do not begin to exhaust this mine of valuable practical suggestions, which we are sure intelligent men cannot but appreciate and render useful in their own labors in this field.

#### PRIVATE SCHOOLS, AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

**FAIR HAVEN.**—It is to be feared, that the notions of many, on the subject of common schools, are altogether too limited and narrow. It seems quite a common opinion, that they are established for the benefit of the poorer portion of the community only, and that the wealthy ought not to burden the public with the education of their children. But a more narrow and anti-republican notion could not be abroad. So long as such a notion prevails, those whose means are more ample will provide for themselves. Private schools will spring up in opposition to the public ones, and the interests and sympathies of property will go with them. Academies will flourish, and take a high rank as seminaries of learning, while the public schools will barely be able to subsist, or attain, at most, to mediocrity. The children of the affluent are educated in the one, and the children of those whose means are limited, are sent to glean what they can from the other; and if this state of things does not kindle up, in the minds of the youth in these opposite schools, a feeling of consequence and superiority on the one hand, and of inferiority and degradation on the other, it is not because the best means in the world have not been used to produce this effect. Besides, it has been ascertained, that five-sixths of the children of the commonwealth depend on the common schools for their education; and if these are neglected, or but poorly provided for, the five-sixths must be more or less dependant on, and subject to the influence of, the remaining sixth, whose advantages, and consequent superior acquirements, must place them in stations of influence and power. The genius of our republican institutions, contemplates no such effect as this from the school system. It requires that the schools be well endowed, and that these endowments should keep pace with the wants of an enlightened and improving people; that they should be purged of every thing inconsistent with the purest taste, and be so guarded, watched over and provided for, as to leave no motive in any to send children into other schools. They should, in short, be the best schools, and such as to draw with them the interests of all

who have children to educate. Then would they be worthy of a republican people. Children and youth of all classes would then be assembled together in the same place, for the same purpose, and with the same common objects of pursuit;—knowing no distinctions but such as nature herself has made; forming attachments and sympathies which are increasing with years, and fitting them to discharge the duties of after-life like members of the same household, whose interests are one, and who are happy only when the good of the whole is attained.

**ROXBURY.**—As long as the public schools are suffered to be inferior to the private, so long the prizes of life, which depend so much on education, will be too much within the reach of money and the accident of parental advantages, and too little within that of merit and native capacity. But, when the public schools are made equal, or superior, then we go far towards realizing our republican theory, viz. equal privileges, and a fair start for the young of all classes.

We propose this as a leading object in the policy of the town, and in the ambition of future school committees. There is no reason, why it should not be accomplished. Such a result would be equally beneficial to all classes. Children, in other respects fitted for the same school, should not be separated on account of any real or fancied distinctions at home, or in society. It is good for them to be together; for all,—the more and the less favored. It is good, that the young should be early led to weigh themselves in the scale of merit, as that in which alone they are finally to find their level. It is good, that those children, whose connections, from unfortunate circumstances, or their own fault, are depressed, and who enjoy little consideration in the world, should be put in a position where such circumstances are unrecognized, where they will be advanced and respected, and led to respect themselves, and to take courage for future success and respectability, according to their talents, fidelity and character. And for those placed at the opposite pole of society, it is equally for their benefit to be so placed, that the narrow notions of caste, which they may unconsciously imbibe in the artificially separate circle in which their parents move, may be enlarged; pride and petty lordliness be repressed; the miserable mistake, that they can rely on any accidents of birth of fortune for future success be corrected; and they be early impressed with the wholesome and invigorating truth, that mental and moral strength and exertion are the chief conditions, on which every thing desirable is staked. It is good that all, from the various conditions in life, should so meet and work together, and blend their sympathies on a common arena, where no distinctions are recognized, but such as each one works out for himself on the spot. In all our codes, and constitutions, and political theories, we have nothing so truly republican in tendency, as the common school, if we made it, in truth, a common school, as it should be.

Other things being equal, public schools, as public, are always better than private ones, and more progress is made in them. There is not a private teacher in Boston, who can fit a boy for college so soon or so well as that same boy would be fitted in the Public Latin School. If, then, we will do our duty by our public schools, we shall not only lessen the expense of education amongst us, but we shall make it better than is now to be obtained at any cost,—intellectually, morally, socially and politically better.

#### DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOL MONEY.

**DANVERS.**—The principle aimed at has been, to give to each scholar, who has a right to attend the public schools, an equal chance, as nearly as practicable, of obtaining an education;—to diffuse the greatest amount of information, equally and proportionably, among all the inhabitants. This money, when raised, belongs to the town. It should, therefore, be used for the general benefit of the whole town.

Because more is raised in one district than another, is no good reason why more should be given back to that district. On the contrary, those who are best able to pay, may be considered, other things being equal, least in need of the money.

The difficulties in distributing equitably, arise principally from the local position and the extreme inequalities of numbers in the several districts. The number between the ages of 4 and 16, varies from 40 to 240 in different districts. Assuming the whole number in the town to be 1200, and the appropriation to be \$3,000, this would give \$2.50 to each scholar; consequently the smaller district would receive \$100, and the larger \$600. Consider also that the children in the smaller district have, on an average, to travel twice as far to attend school as they do in the larger; will any one then say, that, to apportion the money in these districts according to scholars, will be just and equal? The proposition needs only to be stated, and the impulse of every honest mind will immediately answer in the negative. How then shall it be apportioned? Why, as the town has heretofore voted,—according to the wants of the several districts—that is, so as to give each child an equal chance of benefit.

The actual attendance upon school in preceding years has always been considered an item worthy of notice in the apportionment of

the money; and it is proper that it should be so considered to a certain extent. If we find two districts with equal numbers of children, where the average attendance in one is fifty, and in the other only twenty, and this for a series of years, it would be proper that the larger school should have the more money,—otherwise those who attend will not be equally benefited. Inasmuch as it is desirable to secure as full an attendance as possible in all our schools, and if it is understood that those who attend *best* will be rewarded *most*, this will be one of the most effectual means of securing a punctual attendance. The result of our reflections upon the distribution of the money, is, that in the present condition of the districts, no one principle can be named that will constitute a just basis of distribution; but that all the various considerations relating to the subject are proper to be taken into view; and that a discretionary power, to a certain extent, must be delegated to the most honest and impartial board that can be found to exercise it.

As this subject is ably and fully discussed in the Report of the School Committee of Andover for 1838-9, we add an extract from that document.

**ANDOVER.**—Undoubtedly the money raised for the support of schools should be divided so as to accomplish the greatest amount of education for the young; at the same time equalizing, as far as possible, the advantages of education throughout the town. To this general principle all will agree. But how shall the money be so divided as to attain this end? What rule of distribution will do this? This is the question. The difficulties involved in it are greater than many suppose. Those gentlemen who have served the town as selectmen, or who have given a particular attention to this subject, are aware of the difficulties in the case. Others, probably, are not aware of the almost utter impossibility of making a distribution which shall be satisfactory to all. The difficulty arises from the fact that there is no one rule by which a proper distribution can be made. There is no one principle of division which can be strictly and universally followed without coming to a result which would be manifestly unjust and inconsistent with the best interests of the town. The division must be made, not altogether according to any one rule, but with some reference to several rules; and in some measure according to discretion, having respect to the present state of the different schools.

**Distribution according to taxes.**—Suppose the money should be distributed according to the taxes paid in each district. Such a division would be monstrously absurd and unequal. Upon this rule some districts would have more money than they could profitably expend; others would not have enough to make it an object to expend any. Some districts would have more than enough to employ a male teacher the year round, while others could not employ a female teacher a third part of the year. And why should such a principle of division ever be thought of? It is contrary to the principles adopted in appropriating money to every other object. When a district pays taxes for building new roads, it is not for roads built in that district. When a district pays taxes for the support of the poor, it is not for paupers belonging to that district. So when a district pays taxes for schools, it is not for the children in that district. When money is paid into the town treasury, no matter where it was paid, or who paid it, it is the property of the town, not of a district; it is to be expended for the benefit of the town at large, whether for building roads, maintaining paupers, educating children, or for any other legitimate object, though it is to be expended in such a way as shall best promote the general interests of the whole population. This doctrine seems to the committee so obviously just, that they think it must commend itself to the mind of every reflecting and intelligent man.

**Distribution according to families.**—This rule would operate unequally; because it will often happen that a district containing but few families, will have an unusually large proportion of children; then again a district containing many families, will have comparatively few children. It is not uncommon for a district, having about the same number of families from year to year, to vary exceedingly in the number of children at different times. A district, for instance, having thirty scholars at one time, may, in a few years, with the same number of families, have only half, or else double that number.

**Distribution according to scholars.**—This is often thought to be the only true and just rule. But to follow this exclusively would lead to a distribution exceedingly unwise. It would be giving money in such large sums to some districts, and in such small sums to others, as no wise man would think to be profitable or expedient. According to the returns in 1837, the number of persons in the town between four and sixteen years of age, was 1134. The amount of school money divided was about \$2300;—\$2200 being raised by the town, and about \$100 being received from the State, which is not far from two dollars per scholar. It should be remembered, that if the money is to be distributed according to the number of scholars, we must take the *whole number residing in the district*, and not merely the number who *attend school*—the number who

may attend, or who have a *right* to attend, and not those who *actually do attend*. Now our largest districts contain about one hundred and fifty scholars, perhaps more, who have a *right* to attend a district school, while the smaller districts have thirty, twenty, and even a less number. If then the districts were to draw their money according to their scholars, at the rate of two dollars per scholar, the largest districts would receive three hundred dollars, or over, and the smallest sixty, forty, and even less than forty. The large districts could employ a *master*, at twenty-five dollars per month, for the whole twelve months of the year; while the small districts could only employ a *mistress*, at two dollars and fifty cents per week, for six, four, or even *three* months of the year. Now we ask the candid men of this town, would such a distribution be reasonable or right?

**Proper manner of distribution.**—What then is the true ground on which the distribution should be made? If the committee were to recommend a rule, it would perhaps be this, "divide half the money according to the number of families in each district, and the other half according to the number of children, after reserving enough from the amount to make up the smallest sum allowed to at least one hundred dollars." The committee, in dividing the money last spring, determined to give the smallest districts not less than one hundred, and the largest not more than two hundred dollars; giving intermediate sums to other districts according to their scholars and supposed needs. To give less than one hundred dollars to a district is, in our opinion, to give a sum too small to be expended advantageously. After spending the sum necessary for fuel and for the board of instructors, the amount left to employ a male teacher for the winter and a female teacher for the summer is so small, and the schools are so short, that it is money unprofitably expended, if not nearly thrown away. For instance, to spend sixty or seventy-five dollars on a winter and summer school, is little more than to open a school, get it under way, and then close it. Before the scholars have much more than recovered what they have before learned, and have made any real progress, the school is done, the money is spent, and spent to little purpose, if not absolutely wasted. Whereas, if the sum had been a little increased, say to one hundred dollars, an important benefit would have been conferred.

It is thought by some to be unjust that some districts should draw five dollars, and even more per scholar, and other districts draw less than two dollars per scholar. Yet the committee are convinced that this disparity may exist, and still the appropriation be wise, and for the best interests of the town. To illustrate their views on this point, the committee will suppose a case which may not be far from fact. Suppose one school of twenty scholars or less to draw one hundred dollars, or five dollars or more per scholar, and another school of forty scholars to draw the same sum—one hundred dollars, or two dollars and fifty cents per scholar—yet this may not be so unequal as at first thought may be imagined. For, consider that a school of twenty scholars and less suffers a disadvantage in the mere fact of being so small. It will not improve so well as if it were larger; there is less interest, less ambition. A class of two will not have the zeal and enthusiasm of a class of ten. To diminish, then, the money allowed it, is to inflict upon it a double calamity—to add one evil to another. Consider also that the school which has forty scholars experiences not the least disadvantage by having this number, but a benefit. It will improve faster than with a small number. To increase its money, then, is to give it a twofold advantage—the advantage of a larger school, in addition to the advantage of being in better circumstances for improvement. Now suppose that, instead of receiving the same amount, one hundred dollars, they draw according to their scholars, say at three dollars per scholar. The school of twenty or less would then draw only sixty dollars, or even less, and the school of forty would draw one hundred and twenty dollars. That is, the school which is already a sufferer in its improvement, by its small number, is made to suffer again, by being so shortened that the privileges of the district are almost annihilated; while the school which is already a gainer by having a fair number, is a gainer again by being lengthened.

Is it said that this is right, because there are more scholars to be benefited, and more good will be done by giving opportunities of education to forty than to half that number? Here let it be considered that it is of more importance to the welfare of the town and the good of the society, that twenty should have *some* education, than that forty should be *well* educated. That is, it is better that twenty should know the rudiments of arithmetic, than that forty, already having this knowledge, should be far advanced in the science,—that twenty should have a general view of geography, than that forty, already acquainted with it, should know it thoroughly,—that twenty should have some knowledge of spelling, than that forty, who can already spell, should be able to spell perfectly. In an apprenticeship of five years, it is more important for one mechanic to serve the first two years, than for two mechanics to serve the last two; because it is more useful for one to get the necessary rudiments of the art, without which he can do nothing, and by means of which he

can perfect himself, than for two to get accomplishments which can be dispensed with, or easily acquired afterwards. Undoubtedly it would be a greater calamity to the community to have ten persons trained up in ignorance, than to have a hundred persons merely come short of the best education acquired in a common school. This the committee think to be evident; and it is on this ground, that they deem it perfectly just, and often for the greatest good of the town, that some schools should receive five dollars or some more, per scholar, while other schools have less than two dollars.

It ought also to be considered, that the small districts are the remote districts on the out-skirts of the town, and that they are not on an equality with the central districts as it respects many privileges. In the small districts the population is so scattered that the children have to go further to attend school, and therefore have not the same opportunity for attending regularly. Besides, the central districts have academies in their vicinity, to which they can send their children with little expense, while the remote districts are wholly cut off from this advantage, or cannot enjoy it without great inconvenience and cost. The central districts, also, can easily have and do have private schools, without much expense; but in the small out-skirt districts the families are so scattered, and there are so few who are able to support a private school, that they are almost wholly deprived of this means of educating their children. In these various respects, as well as others, the inhabitants of these districts are not, and cannot be on an equality with others. It is not in the power of the town to make them share equally in these advantages, or to favor them in these respects. But in distributing the school money, the town can favor them. By giving them a liberal share, the town can make up to them, in some degree, what they lose in other respects; though with all the favor that can be shown in this way, they never can have equal advantages with the population of our centres. And we appeal to all reasonable and upright men, if it is not right—if it is not a duty to consider these things; and so distribute public favors as to promote, as far as practicable, a general equality of privileges among all the inhabitants of the town.

#### UNION DISTRICT SCHOOLS, AND HIGH SCHOOLS.

GOSHEN.—Your committee are fully convinced, that upon the present plan, distributing the public money among the several districts, there is a great *loss of means*; that the benefit derived from our money so expended, is very much less than it would be, were a different disposition made of it. Some of our districts are so small, that the schools are very short. Nor is there the interest awakened among scholars, that we might expect, were they longer. To illustrate this:—a teacher is employed, say for \$15 per month; he teaches 15 scholars. Now he could quite as well, and even better,—easier to himself,—teach double that number, and the school would make greater proficiency. In sustaining two schools, each containing 15 or 20 scholars, there is a dead loss of more than the expense of one of them. If the two schools could be brought together, the scholars could enjoy the privileges of a school *twice* the length of time they now do, and would make more than twice the proficiency in their studies, without any additional expense. There is another objection to our present system. It brings together, in our winter schools, those of different ages, from three to twenty years. All who have taught school, and others who reflect a moment, must perceive, that, by this arrangement, the operations of a school are very much embarrassed, and its progress greatly retarded.

They, therefore, ask the privilege of proposing a plan contemplating a material alteration in our school system, which, they are confident, will secure to our youth much greater advantages, from the same expenditure of money.

Let there be established a Central School, for the exclusive benefit of our youth over ten years old. Let a house be built by the town. For the purpose of accomplishing two objects at once, and to save expense, it is proposed to erect a building of sufficient size, two stories high. Let the room in one of the stories be used as a town-house, and the other appropriated to the use of the Central School.

It is proposed, that the schools be sustained in the following manner, viz. Let the Northwest District, (in consideration of their distance from the centre, and the size of their school,) receive their proportion of the school money as they now do, and expend it in sustaining a school in summer and winter. The remaining four districts shall receive, each, a certain portion of the public money,—a sufficient sum, at least, to sustain a female school, in the warm season, four months; and let the remainder of the money of the four districts be appropriated to support the central school; to which all the youth, above ten years old, shall have equally free access. It is proposed to have this central school commence on the first Wednesday in September, and it is believed, that, ordinarily, it can be sustained at least six months in the year. The design is, to procure for the central school, a teacher of such qualifications that the advantages will be equal to any select school. As this school is contemplated with reference to the good of the whole town, (as far as

it may be,) it is proposed, that the scholars of the Northwest District, (though they do nothing towards supporting the school, yet in consideration of their assistance in building a school-room,) be admitted to the school with an abatement of one third of the tuition, \$2 instead of \$3, which is the usual price per term.

To your committee, it seems very desirable that the above plan, or something like it, should be adopted; and for the following, among other reasons. First, it is much more economical than the present system. By its adoption, we shall secure longer schools in summer, and our winter term will be twice as long as our winter schools now are. It will afford very much greater advantages, and yet there will be only the same expenditure of money. The two select schools, taught in this place within the last two years, have cost the town about \$100 each. By the adoption of the above plan, we shall secure all the advantages of a select school in the autumn, in addition to all, and more than all, the advantages now derived from our winter schools.

2d. A second reason for adopting it, is, that it is a plan eminently *republican*. The practice of having a select school, unless a better course can be adopted, we earnestly hope will be kept up from year to year; but still there are some objections to it. At least, the plan proposed seems, to your committee, very much preferable to it.—Select schools have a favorable influence upon the cause of education in a town, but there are always more or less shut out from the privileges they afford. Whenever one of these schools is opened, there are many who would attend, were it a Free School, and who, perhaps, would make better proficiency than many who do attend, and yet cannot for want of means. The plan proposed will open to such, *free access* to all the privileges of a select school, not for three months in a year only, but for six months. It brings the means of a good education within reach of all our youth, the poor as well as the rich. It will occasion no superiority or inferiority, except what talent, cultivated or abused talent, shall create.

3d. Another reason for its adoption, is, the social advantages to be derived from it. It will bring the youth, from the different parts of our town, together; they will be associated under circumstances, in which they will exert a refining and quickening influence upon one another. Under the care of a judicious and faithful teacher, their intercourse together will be healthful. The dull and stupid will be quickened, by being brought in contact with the more sprightly. The coarse and uncouth will learn gentleness, by witnessing the deportment of the modest and mild. The gay and airy will be rebuked by the more sober and discreet.

4th. Such a plan, or something like it, should be adopted, to supersede the necessity of sending our youth abroad to be educated.—But a small portion of parents can, without serious embarrassment, be at the expense of thus educating their children; and, aside from the expense, it is much better for the youth, themselves, to receive their education, at least what may be termed a common education, at home, under the care and immediate supervision of their parents.

We would not be understood to say, that youth should *never* be sent abroad to school,—but we would say, that, in such a town as this, it is exceedingly desirable that we should secure, among ourselves, the means of giving our youth a good business education.—The school now in contemplation, will, it is believed, afford such means to our youth.

5th. Finally, your committee would recommend this plan as one of *general utility* to the town. Its direct influence will be, to raise the standard of education amongst us. It will excite, in our youth, an increased desire for intellectual improvement, thus giving them a disrelish for low and hurtful amusements, and allure them from immoral and vicious practices. It will operate to bring out and cultivate the best talent. The young aspirant after knowledge will here find a path open before him, leading to intelligence, respectability, and an enlarged sphere of usefulness. The elevation which might be given, by such a school, might serve as a stepping stone to the highest attainments in literature, honor and usefulness, that are within the reach of man, and these attainments, too, might be made by a youth from the most obscure family among us. But for want of some such encouragement, the same youth, oppressed by poverty and disheartened by obstacles, might have yielded to the pressure; the kindling fires of his mind might have been quenched, and he would have taken a low and obscure stand through life.—“Knowledge is power;”—joined with right moral influence, it is *respectability*. Whatever, therefore, will bring into healthful action the talent, whatever will increase the intelligence of our youth, will increase the wealth, respectability and power, of our town. Viewed in this light, therefore, your committee would urge the adoption of the plan before you, as one of general utility to the whole town.

HAVEHILL.—The influences which have combined to prevent the establishment of such a public town school, have, perhaps, been these; a general aversion to any apparent increase of the expenses of the town, and the supposed difficulty of devising any plan for the accomplishment of the object, that should be at all satisfactory to the community in general. And it is instructive to observe, how

for the want of a little better acquaintance with the facts, and a very little more reflection upon those facts, our citizens have so often voted directly in opposition to their own best interests. Thus the village says, we will not vote to raise more money for instruction, because the out parishes refuse to let us have this public town school; and the out parishes say, we will not vote for a public town school, because this will be a benefit to no one out of the village; and furthermore, the village refuses to raise more money that our schools may be improved. Whereas, if all had combined, both to raise more money and to establish this other school, it would have cost us in the aggregate *no more*, if indeed it did not cost us *absolutely less*, than it does at present, the expense would have been more equally divided among our citizens, and our children would be enjoying vastly superior advantages for education.

During the year 1838, there was paid in this town, for private schools, \$1,446 94. During 1839, the amount has been even larger, viz. \$1,560. We will, however, estimate it at only \$1,500. This, added to the \$2,300 raised by vote, makes \$3,800 paid by our citizens for the instruction of their children during the past year. Now \$3,500 would be, perhaps, the largest appropriation which the town would find it necessary to make, at present, for the purpose of instruction, even if they should establish a public town school, thus insuring a direct saving of \$300 per annum, to say nothing of the superiority of the schools with which we should be thus provided. Those of our citizens who pay the largest amount of taxes, are the very ones who pay the most for the private instruction of their children. The amount by which these taxes would be increased, were the town to raise thirty-five instead of twenty-three hundred dollars for schools, is a mere fraction, in comparison with the ten or twenty, and forty or even fifty dollars, which they now pay annually to the academy or other private schools. While that large class among us whose properties are small, and who are compelled to practise a severe economy to give their children a few weeks or months in a private school, or even to send them to school at all, would be doubly benefitted, in having the advantages of their children greatly increased, at an expense to themselves vastly less than that which at present they incur for private schools, of their own accord. Thus it must, we think, be obvious to every one, that the establishment of a public town school, and the raising of an amount sufficient for the purpose, say thirty-five hundred dollars, by vote of the town, would be a *direct* and a *great pecuniary saving* to all our citizens who have children to be educated. The only other class who can be supposed to feel interested on the subject, are tax-payers, whose children are already educated, or who have none for whose intellectual necessities to provide. With them, this, as all other questions of public expenditure, appeals to their interests in the public intelligence and virtue,—interests which they, of all men, are to be presumed to be most desirous to promote, and for the promotion of which, as good and honorable citizens, they are justly expected to be most zealous in effort, and most hearty in self-denial.

**LOWELL.**—The influence of this school, (the public High School, the building for which cost about \$18,000,) is felt, as an incentive to exertion, through all the public schools in the city. Its object is to place, within reach of the poorest citizen, such means of preparing his children for college, or for giving instruction, or for any branch of active business, as the richest shall be glad to avail themselves of, for their own children. This object has been, thus far, realized. More needs not to be said, to commend this institution to the especial sympathy and favor of the people. The spacious and well planned edifice now in building for its use, makes it unnecessary to speak of its present accommodations. The scale of public munificence, in this work, is not more liberal, than its principles and aims are enlightened and just.

#### SCHOOL COMMITTEES.

**ROXBURY.**—The town wants, above all things, competent, faithful and energetic committees. The present committee, we think we may say, have been as attentive and laborious as any preceding board ever was; but we know very well, though others may not accuse us, how far we have come short of what it is possible for a committee to do, for the improvement of the schools. It is by no means requisite that all the members of so large a committee should be highly educated men; but it is very desirable that they should all interest themselves, deeply, in the subject of education,—that they all, or a large portion of them, should be men to study the improvements of the day, and know how, and how far, to introduce them. They should have sympathy with the teachers in their labors and trials, which are many and great, and be charitable and indulgent towards them; but, at the same time, they should know how much to expect and require of them. They should have clear and high conceptions of what a school should do for its members. They should know how to appreciate and encourage a competent and useful teacher, and how to stimulate or displace a sluggish or incompetent one. They are to infuse spirit where it is wanting, and be able and prompt to teach the teacher, and to suggest new modes

and devices for the attainment of new excellence and the correction of old deficiencies. They must not allow themselves, or the teachers, or the town, (if they can help it,) to be satisfied with a low standard, or a stationary condition; but feel that the order of the day, for schools and all concerned in them, is progress, and that without end or limit. For all this there must be zeal and knowledge, time, patience and perseverance.

#### SCHOOLHOUSES.

This subject, in some or all of its most essential features, is touched upon in nearly all of the Reports. It is shown to have an important bearing on the health, comfort, love of study, and progress of the scholar, and the health and success of the teacher, both in government and instruction.

**PITTSFIELD.**—Much of the labor of the instructor is lost, from a neglect in the construction, or the finishing, of the buildings where it is bestowed. Ill-arranged seats may give the wayward and mischievous part of a school the opportunity to be idle, whispering, or playful, unless his attention be constantly directed to the preservation of order, while equally important and more necessary duties are passed by, or are but imperfectly performed; and where scholars, too, are suffering and even shuddering, with cold feet or hands, from a needless circulation of cold air, admitted through openings in the floors, at the windows and doors, and even the sides of the house, they may, indeed, go through the daily routine of reading, writing, reciting, and the like; but the work is mechanical. The organs and members of the body accomplish their appointed task. But there is no proper exercise of the mind, to bring home to itself the expected improvement; because its exercise is mainly limited to bearing the uneasiness, and perhaps the actual sufferings, of the body. Similar remarks will also well apply to the excessive heat, which is sometimes endured in the schools of the summer, and which might be partly remedied in time, by planting trees, designed for shading.

**NEW SALEM.**—To huddle forty or fifty children into such an ill-conditioned hovel, where their situation is not only unpleasant but painful, where the air soon becomes stupefying and unwholesome, and their health is imminently endangered, is no small offence against the laws of humanity; and it is equally opposed to economy. In so large a school, enough would be gained, in the comfort and improvement of the scholars, in a very short period, to defray the expense of erecting a commodious and elegant house; to say nothing of the honor and ornament it would add to the district and the town.

**NEWBURY.**—Several of the schoolhouses, in their present state, are totally unfit for their purpose. Many of them are open and cold, requiring, in the cold weather, large fires, so that those children, who happen to be seated near them, are obliged almost to undergo a process of roasting, before the teeth of their more remote fellows cease to chatter. In one of the districts, a large and apparently old stove was continued in use, as it was supposed, on the score of economy; and, when visited by the committee, the room was filled with smoke, so that it was excessively uncomfortable to be in the room, and the teacher informed us, that then, the room was in better than ordinary condition.

Early habits of neatness and good order are of no little consequence to the young; yet their habits cannot well be promoted in places which are themselves dirty, and which, from the numerous unightly marks and figures observable, proclaim themselves to have been scenes of confusion, and the abodes of depraved tastes.

**HORINGTON.**—They are, generally, too small, by one third or one half, so that there is no suitable place reserved for recitation. The seats are necessarily uncomfortable; the children are crowded together, much to their own inconvenience, and the great annoyance of the teacher. Under such circumstances, it is impossible for scholars to make that progress in their studies which they might otherwise make. And the confinement and impurity of the air, in consequence of the contractedness of our schoolrooms, must necessarily impair the health, undermine the constitution, and sow the seeds of future disease and death.

**GRAFTON.**—With respect to the venerable schoolhouse in this district, the committee forbear to suggest any alterations or amendments, not because they consider it fruitless, but because they are convinced that it would be easier to make a new one, than to make the present one decent. They are of opinion that this aged servant of the district has done its duty long enough, and should be forever discharged from further service.

**BARRE.**—They are not all what they should be, inviting in appearance and comfort, and calling up pleasing associations in the minds of children and youth, as places where they have spent many happy hours, and laid the foundation, by studious and correct habits, of future usefulness. Some of them are cold and cheerless, some smoky, some badly and inconveniently constructed, and all of them poorly provided with the means of ventilation. Some, although they have good stoves, have no shovel nor tongs; and broken dogs, with one end resting on stones, frequently tumbling over with a crash

upon the floor, or stones without dogs of any kind, serve imperfectly to keep the fuel up out of the ashes.

**HINSDALE.**—What father of a family, who has any regard to the comfort of his household, would suffer the windows of his house to go broken, week after week, letting in, upon his wife and children, the cold blasts of a winter's storm? But it is just as uncomfortable for a child to sit in the school-room, under a broken window, as in his father's house. But it is not only sometimes uncomfortably cold, perhaps as frequently it is too warm. Crowded with scholars, and heated by an injudicious fire, the air in the room soon becomes impure, and the consequence is, a general lassitude comes over the school, and prostrates the energy of every mind. What parent would be willing to have his child sit at home, for the hour together, upon a stool, with no back nor arms to support him, and with his feet six inches from the floor, dangling? But this is just as many of the scholars sit in our schools; and, if they are restless, they must be punished into stillness.

**FALMOUTH.**—A great proportion of the seats, on which the small scholars sit, are too high to admit of their feet touching the floor, and some are destitute of backs, for the scholars to lean against. This posture cannot fail to produce great present inconvenience and pain, and probably future deformity. The distance between some of the seats and forms, is liable to the same objection. The scholars cannot write, without leaning their chests on the forms.—But neither of the above postures should ever be allowed. The scholars should sit so as fairly to rest their feet on something, either floor or stool; and never be allowed to lean on the forms when writing.

**CARLISLE.**—The school in this district has, for a number of years, enjoyed the comfort and convenience of a schoolhouse, built substantially and with good taste, conveniently constructed, and furnished with a black-board, maps, diagrams, and geometrical and astronomical apparatus. To this cause, together with the interest and liberality manifested, by the inhabitants of this district, in the concerns of their school, and the unwearied efforts of the teacher of the last summer school, who has often been employed by the district, may justly be attributed the high rank it sustains.

#### APPARATUS FOR SCHOOLS.

The importance of visible illustration in the work of instruction is ably insisted on. Although there is very general complaint of the absence of even the simplest apparatus, such as black-board, maps, globes, &c., still there is evidence that the work of improvement is begun.

**CARLISLE.**—Of many important branches of science, a scholar would acquire more knowledge in a few weeks, by the aid of some simple apparatus, than he could, from the mere study of a book, in as many months. It serves to stimulate the minds of children to inquiry and exertion, and interests them in studies, which otherwise would be dry and uninteresting. The school, in district No. 4, has long been provided with diagrams, maps, globes, astronomical and geometrical apparatus, and the present standing of this school is the best evidence of its utility.

**BRIGHTON.**—They finally made purchase of the following articles:

Pneumatic Apparatus,	\$37
Chemical,	25
Orrery,	8
Tellurium,	6
Globes—3,	12
Thermometers—4,	5
State Maps—4,	7

\$100

By distributing these articles, among the different schools, and by exchanges from one to another, the advantage to be derived from them, has been made as general as possible. That all might have an opportunity of examining the apparatus, an invitation was extended to the people of the town, together with the pupils of the different schools, to meet at the Town Hall on the evening of the 2d of April, to hear some explanation upon the same. The full attendance on this occasion, was as gratifying to the committee, as honorable to the inhabitants of the place. The committee cannot leave this subject, without congratulating the town, upon this valuable accession to the means of improvement in our schools.

#### DISTRICT SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

This is a department of popular education, which is just beginning to receive attention in New England, and while we are discussing the propriety of making the art of printing really available to the poor man and the laboring man, by bringing within his reach, and the reach of his children, these libraries of well selected books, New York, with the same gigantic effort which has developed her material resources, will have scattered one or two millions of volumes through her school

districts. Connecticut is admirably situated to enter upon this field of improvement. By appropriating only five cents on a scholar, from the avails of the school fund, on condition that the school societies, or districts, should raise the same amount, she can purchase twenty-four thousand volumes a year, and thus bring the pleasures and advantages of knowledge to the fireside and the workshop of every family in the State. Massachusetts has, with a wise forecast, made provision for the preparation of a suitable library, which is now in the course of publication by Marsh, Capen, Lyon & Webb,—a great and expensive enterprise, which deserves the early patronage of districts, and the friends of common schools, not only in Massachusetts, but elsewhere. This subject too receives the notice of the committees in their reports.

**SOUTH READING.**—It is highly desirable, that every school district should avail itself of the law, authorizing the establishment of these libraries. The books, being fitted for common use, would pass from the school into the family, and increase the interest of parents, in the better education of their children, by giving them new views of its value, and would form a valuable accession to our means for training up the young in the way they should go.

**LENEX.**—Could the district schools be furnished with these books, or with others of a kindred character, as they may now be with comparatively trifling expense, they would find their way into the families of the several districts, and parents and children would alike be benefited. On the part of the children, interesting and useful employment would be furnished for many a leisure hour, especially in the long winter evenings, which it is to be feared is now devoted to idle, not to say vicious amusements.

**GOSHEN.**—The subject of school libraries is deserving attention. Many of our youth grow up without a taste for reading, because suitable and interesting books are not to be obtained. If young persons acquire a taste for substantial reading, there is little danger that they will stroll from home, and spend their evenings in bad company; and would it not afford parents much pleasure, to see their sons and daughters gathered around their own firesides, listening to an interesting narrative or biography, rather than the consciousness that they were whiling away their time in the bar-room, drinking, smoking, and acquiring other loaferish habits.

**RANDOLPH.**—If the doctrine of political equality is ever to be reduced to practice, it must be done by the thorough moral and intellectual education of the mechanic and working classes. Elementary instruction is only the first stage in the progress of such an education, and but little will be accomplished if there be no advance beyond it. It is not enough that suitable provision be made to carry all the children in the town through this stage. Public sentiment demands, and the public good requires, that all needed facilities to a career of self-instruction, should be furnished. District libraries are well calculated to exert a beneficial influence in this respect.—It is a subject of deep regret, that the opportunity offered to school districts for establishing such libraries, has not been embraced with a zeal commensurate to their importance. No district in this town has manifested a willingness to levy the small sum, (thirty dollars,) authorized by law for that purpose. Were such libraries established under proper regulations, they would prove not only invaluable sources for the acquisition of much useful knowledge by parents and children, and of the purest enjoyments of life, but strong inducements to withdraw the youth from congregating for their boisterous evening sports, or collecting at places where what they see, hear and do, tends only to corrupt their minds, debase their morals, and render them coarse and vulgar in their conversation and habits.

#### SUMMER SCHOOLS.

**LANCASTER.**—In our opinion, the summer schools are not sufficiently prized by the community. They are comparatively cheap, and, like too many other things of little cost, are too lightly estimated. Hence, there is little pains taken to secure a regular attendance of the pupils; and an entire desertion of them by many, who might be much profited by a longer attendance.

**UXBRIDGE.**—In our summer schools, our children commence their education, and it is of great importance that they commence well,—that they be well taught and well disciplined. Effort should, then, be made to secure good teachers for all these schools,—teachers who are well educated, who are respected in the community, and who respect themselves,—and who, there may be sufficient reason to believe, will instruct and govern those committed to their charge, with ease and success. In employing teachers for summer schools, the prudential committee, in districts in which the scholars are young, and, perhaps, comparatively backward in their education, appear often to think, that those of limited qualifications will be as useful as those more thoroughly educated. No one should suffer himself to reason in this manner.

**FAXTON.**—Parents cannot be too deeply impressed with the importance of having well educated females for instructors, in the sum-

mer schools; for in these schools is laid the foundation of good reading. Almost every one acknowledges the difficulty of overcoming a bad habit, and habits acquired in youth, are of all others the most difficult to be subdued. If children are allowed to read in a hurried manner, in a low voice, and with an indistinct articulation of the syllables or words, this style of reading soon becomes habitual, and is a very great obstacle to their ever becoming good readers. It is very difficult, even for men of education, to correct their own faults in the pronunciation of particular words, because they pronounce them from habit, and are not aware of the error at the time of speaking. Children ought to be taught, in their first lessons in reading, to pronounce words so distinctly, that the proper sound of every vowel, which ought to be sounded at all, shall be clearly heard. From such early instruction springs good reading, one of the most desirable accomplishments of an education.

#### WINTER SCHOOLS.

**MEDWAY.**—In the winter term, so important to the largest scholars, who are about finishing their elementary education, the time and attention of the teacher is necessarily too much occupied with very young children, who might be as well or better instructed by a female, at much less expense. There are eight school districts. One half of the scholars, in all the schools, may be taught and governed as well by a female.

**WARR.**—It is proper that something should be said upon the expediency of putting the female sex into winter schools, to which all ages are admitted. Though they may sometimes succeed, as was the fact in the case referred to this winter, yet in the majority of instances, they make a failure. There is an incongruity on the very face of such an arrangement. Females are of too delicate a texture, for the rudeness and consequential importance of boys, 14, 15, or 16 years of age. Our winter schools, almost always, have some of that age. A woman can do nothing with such, if they are disposed to be contrary.

**GOSHEN.**—The younger members engross so much of the time of the teacher, that he cannot render that assistance, to older members, he otherwise might. The real progress of small scholars, in winter schools, is universally expected to be small. If the truth were known, probably many a little child has been sent to school in winter, there to engross much of the teacher's time and attention, not expecting it would learn much, but, forsooth, to rid the mother of care at home. It seems to the committee that it is hardly equitable to the larger scholars; that it is not an economical mode of expending money for so small a consideration, to support a teacher at fifteen or twenty dollars per month, and engross his time, in this way, to the manifest detriment of the older members of the school; when a female teacher, for one third the money, might teach the smaller scholars more successfully than a male teacher.

#### NEGLECT OF PRIMARY STUDIES.

**ENFIELD.**—The elementary parts of an education, such as reading and spelling, are too quickly and superficially passed over, for the higher branches, and scholars too often leave school, with a smattering of almost every thing, and a thorough knowledge of nothing.

**OKHAM.**—The importance of reading, spelling and writing, can never be overrated. Give a man a thorough knowledge of the spelling book, the ability to read fluently and understandingly, a good knowledge of figures, with the skill of writing a fair legible hand, and he is prepared for almost any business. The art of spelling has been, of late, regarded as a branch of minor importance,—a branch to be studied by small scholars only. This mistaken notion, your committee, regarding as a fundamental error, have made an effort to correct it, and have reason to believe their efforts have not been in vain.

**ROCHESTER.**—One of the greatest defects in our school instruction, is the putting forward young children to studies beyond their ability, and before they have acquired those branches that ought to precede. They are studying geography, arithmetic, and history, before they can read and spell. There is no branch of education, in which there is such an extensive deficiency in our country as spelling.—One reason for this is, that it is an acquirement that must be made in early life; and if not done then, it is not done at all.

#### SPELLING.

**FREETOWN.**—As to spelling, there seems to be no good reason, why children should be kept drilling on unintelligible words for half a dozen years of their first school-going days. No wonder, that, where this course has been pursued, children have become weary of school and hated their books. It is dry, tedious and uninteresting. They need to have something which they can understand, about which they can think; for, to learn to think correctly, and how to express our thoughts in language and in writing accurately, is a very important object of education. True, a little time must be taken, to learn the letters and their uses; but instruction and amusement ought to be mingled with it. As soon as they can pro-

nounce a syllable, set them to read easy words; or, better still, let them learn their letters by the use of sentences composed of words of one syllable; or from the names of animals and familiar objects connected with their pictures, and they will find it a pleasure. Let them spell them as an amusement, and not as the main object. Let them also have slates to occupy them a part of every half day, and they will soon learn to make letters, figures, pictures, maps; and learn to write considerably; besides becoming tolerable readers in three or four years,—the time often consumed in spelling alone.—Let every child in school have a small slate, or a part of one, and he will love to go to school. We have known children learn to write very well at five and seven years old, by the use of the slate alone. The older scholars, who can write easily, should write ten or fifteen words, as there is time, every day, instead of spelling.—This is all the practical use of spelling, that we make, except reading; and spelling is, after all, mostly learned by reading. Those who spell by the ear, may guess right, but let them spell by the eye, that is, in writing a letter for instance,—the object for which they need to spell, and perhaps half of their words will be spelled wrong. We have known some, who never spelled in the common way, but have learned by reading and writing, who hardly ever spell a word wrong.

#### READING.

**FREETOWN.**—Better read less, and give time for questions and explanations. It is a rare thing to find a good reader, in a country where almost every person can read. Children are pleased and instructed when they understand what they read; and this fact, with the importance of forming such a habit, is a sufficient reason for taking great pains to attain it. The most approved way to get a class to read correctly is, to have them correct each other by holding up the hand when a mistake is discovered, and the teacher's calling upon any one to correct it—when the sentence is read again, till it is read correctly. In this way, the interest of all is increased in the exercise; all become critics in reading, and improve rapidly. This is almost an entire contrast, after it has been practiced awhile, to the common, dull, monotonous, unintelligible way of reading.

#### WRITING.

**DANVERS.**—The writing in our schools has been an object of particular attention the past winter. We have long been apprehensive that the method of teaching scholars to write *fine hand*, before they had attained a free use of the pen by writing a fair *copy hand*, or *coarse hand*, was of doubtful utility; and we are fully confirmed in this belief. One of our first instructions in the schools was, to initiate the scholar in the writing of coarse hand, and to keep him upon that, until he could write it fairly. In those schools where this direction has been observed, the benefits have appeared conspicuous. We have very little doubt that the present deteriorated hand writing in our schools, as compared with what it was fifteen years ago, is mainly attributable to a neglect of this rule. Another, and perhaps not less important consideration, is the ability of the teacher to write well. Because some few men of genius have been entirely inattentive to their hand writing, or may have been willing to manifest their eccentricities in this way, it is considered by some, who have their conceit without their ability, to be an indication of genius. But however this may be, to write badly is not a good qualification for a schoolmaster; and generally it will be found, that youth at school learn to write very nearly in proportion to the ability of the teacher in setting copies. The practice of giving slips to young scholars is, often, but an apology for not knowing how to set their copies.

The committee have endeavored to obtain specimens of the writing in the several schools, but have not succeeded in all of them, according to their wishes. In some of them their requests have been duly observed; in others, teachers have taken advantage of having been requested, instead of directed, and have but imperfectly complied therewith. We consider this one of the most essential exercises of our common schools, and think more care should hereafter be had as to the ability of teachers in this art, and that no one should be deemed qualified to take charge of a school, who cannot readily write a fair, handsome hand.

In order to test the proficiency of the scholars in this branch, we recommend that a sufficient number of suitable books should be procured, so that each district may be furnished with one at the opening of the winter school, and that each scholar may be required to write therein, at the opening and at the close of the school. Let it be understood, that such a record will be made of the improvement of each scholar, each year, and that these books will be preserved by the committee, in continued remembrance of their ability, and it will serve as a stimulant to increased attention. The art of writing only requires attention, to be acquired with a good degree of elegance.

**FREETOWN.**—Writing being commenced on the slate, will save much trouble, and expense of ink and paper; and, at the age of ten or a dozen years, children may profitably use a writing-book. If

this branch is properly attended to in school in this way, with a definite half hour for all to attend to it together,—and if the teacher takes any good degree of pains with the school, all may become good writers, and save the expense of writing schools, except for some who may wish to make extra preparations for teaching or the counting-room. Indeed, every study should have its fixed hour in the day, and a list be posted up by the teacher's desk; for where so much is to be done, it cannot be done *well* without system.

#### ARITHMETIC.

**FREETOWN.**—All who are studying arithmetic, should also recite in classes. It is as necessary as to recite in grammar or geography. Then every thing can be made intelligible, learnt thoroughly, and the class will gain much from one another's explanations. But to do this, every schoolhouse must be furnished with one or more black-boards, on which questions can be worked out before a whole class. To hear a class, will be often better for the teacher, than to work out questions for individuals; a saving of time, and then the whole would have the benefit. Sometimes, too, an older scholar may work out a question on the black-board for a younger, and save the teacher's time. The black-board will often be needed, also, by the teacher, to draw maps, to write directions for all the school, themes for writing, and frequent daily illustrations in teaching, so that no school ought to be without a black-board. The teacher ought to spend some part of his evenings in preparing *practical* questions in arithmetic, in addition to what are in the books,—in store accounts, interest, &c., to be copied on slips of paper, or written on the black-board, for the classes to work out; also, miscellaneous questions, to exercise their ingenuity in devising rules to perform them. The books do not make arithmetic sufficiently practical.

#### GRAMMAR.

**WELLFLEET.**—More attention has been paid to the study of English grammar than heretofore. This has been for a long time regarded as a hard, uncertain and disagreeable study,—disliked by the pupil, and avoided, as much as possible, by the teacher. The reluctance which was felt, seemed to arise from a belief that a knowledge of the grammatical construction of language would be of no use to them in after-life. This prejudice is fast giving way, and the utility of grammar is beginning to be felt, by every individual, who may have a thought to communicate to others in writing.

#### GEOGRAPHY.

**BELCHERTOWN.**—*Geography* is a science requiring the exercise of memory. When this is taught by the aid of maps and globes and charts, other faculties are brought to aid the memory, and are a great assistance. We would suggest to the town more attention to the supply of these aids. This science is intimately connected with chronology and history, all of which very much depend on accuracy in the acquisition, and care in retaining the knowledge, we have of either.

#### MUSIC.

**NORTHAMPTON.**—Let vocal music be considered as one of the regular branches; as much so as arithmetic. I am thoroughly convinced of the practicability of its introduction, generally, into common schools; and I believe it is only necessary fairly to make the experiment, to convince the public of its great utility. It is high time the doctrine be exploded, that the musician, like the poet, is born so. Not that all can become equally good singers, any more than all can become good readers; but all can read; and so, I think, all can sing. In my school, the young boys all sing. I believe there is not one exception. Many of the older ones do not. A boy that knows something of music, will learn to read more readily, and become a better reader, than one who does not. I am satisfied that music exerts a salutary influence upon the moral character, and tends greatly to soften and improve the manners. Where music is taught, a school may be much more easily governed, and why should not this part of our nature be cultivated as well as others?

**LOWELL.**—Music has, in many places, been successfully introduced, among the branches of popular education. With the view of eliciting the public sentiment, on this subject, among our own citizens, the committee have published, in the newspapers of the city, an article, expressing their own wishes for its introduction here.—So far as they have been informed, the suggestion was favorably received. They have heard no objection. They, therefore, respectfully recommend the appropriation of \$500, for this purpose, for the ensuing year, if, in the judgment of the city council, it can be done, without compromising paramount interests.

#### MORAL INSTRUCTION.

**ROXBURY.**—It is necessary that teachers be persons of the highest moral principles, and strictly exemplary life and conversation. We expect them to exercise a strong and steady moral influence over their pupils. We do not want preaching in our schools, much less

sectarianism, or cant, but we would have teachers keep a steady eye to the quiet inculcation, by precept and example, of strict truth and honesty, industry and punctuality, kindness and civility, a clean tongue, and respectful demeanor, and reverent words and thoughts on all subjects that mankind deem sacred. The acquisition of knowledge and mental development are the great business of a school, to which the time and labor are to be devoted, and yet, without interfering with this, we would have the impression distinctly prevail, with teachers and taught,—a silent but powerful undercurrent,—the impression that after all, mere intellectual accomplishments are, as Walter Scott says of them, "but moonshine compared with the education of the heart."

#### CHANGE OF TEACHERS.

**SITUATE.**—This practice your committee believe to be injurious to the welfare of the schools. This is owing, in a great measure, to the small number of persons who make teaching a profession.—They take it up, sometimes, only for a short term of three or four months, without intending ever again to engage in the employment. Our schools suffer, by these means, from inefficient teachers. And even when they are so fortunate as to obtain a competent one, it requires some part of the short term he is engaged to ascertain the different dispositions and capacities of the children. This might be saved, were he continued as long as he gave satisfaction.

**RICHMOND.**—For several years past, none of your schools have had the same teacher two terms in succession. It is necessary for the proper government of a school, that the teacher should understand the general dispositions of the scholars and their attainments, in order to classify them to advantage. This will require some time. It will, also, require some time for the scholars to become acquainted with the teacher, so that they feel easy in his presence, and can approach him with confidence. Now, nearly all this time is lost at the beginning of every school, so long as you continue to change your teacher every season. When a teacher can be obtained, who can secure the confidence of the parents, and the affections of his pupils, he should be retained, although you have to increase his wages one half,—the advantages of this course would soon be perceived and acknowledged by all. The meeting of the scholars and teacher, at the commencement of every term, would resemble that of a fond parent, returning to the bosom of his family, after a long absence. After mutual congratulations, each would repair to the post assigned him, and take up his work from the place where he left it, pursue his studies with diligence, and do more in one term, and do it better, than is now done in two.

#### REMOVAL OF INCOMPETENT TEACHERS.

**ROXBURY.**—Every principle of public good, official duty, and justice to the young, requires that such changes should be made freely and independently, the moment it is, for any reason, deemed expedient. It ought to be perfectly understood, that no teacher has the slightest claim to his place, (reasonable notice being given,) for a day longer than the committee think it, on all accounts, best. It should never be considered the slightest injustice or hardship, for a teacher to be discharged, however long or short his term of service may have been. A teacher may be a very meritorious person, and highly qualified for some situations in the profession, and yet be, in some respects, unsuitable for the precise position which he or she may happen to occupy in our service, so that his or her dismissal may be highly expedient, and yet not be any disparagement of that teacher's general qualifications. Such dismissal should not be regarded as any deprivation of rights, or impeachment of character or competency. It is not necessary, in order to effect a change, that a teacher should be put on trial and proved incompetent, or that he be even charged with incompetency. It is enough if the committee think they can, in any respect, do better in the particular circumstances, for the particular school. Then we are bound to do it. And we would have this to be the understanding between the committees, the teachers in their employ, and the town. When any change is made in teachers, in a town school, it is not well that their friends or neighbors, or the citizens generally, should cry out as if a wrong, instead of a duty, were done. There should be no murmur, that an old and faithful servant, or a new and promising one, is unkindly treated, and deprived of his or her living, and turned adrift upon the world. We sympathize with the poor and dependent in any situation, but we must never let a town school, above all things, become a pauper establishment, and sacrifice the highest interests of fifty children to a motive of charity to an individual, however deserving. There are other modes of charity, both private and public, far cheaper and more suitable.

#### IMPROVEMENT OF TEACHERS.

**ROXBURY.**—Teachers must keep up with the age. They must not be stationary, nor let their schools be so. They must improve themselves, or they will not improve their schools. They must not become obsolete. They must constantly rise, or they will sink.—

They must be growing brighter, or they will become rusty. They must not think that the system or state of things which was good and satisfactory ten, five, or two years ago, will answer in years to come. They must keep the minds of their pupils alive and alert, and fill them.

We had marked other passages for insertion, before the January number of the North American Review came to our hands, containing an article on the Massachusetts common school system, or rather on the more recent legislation of that state on the subject. The article is based on the reports of the Board of Education, and their Secretary for 1838-39 and 40, and the abstracts of school returns, made up under Mr. Mann's directions and labors. The article does no more than justice to Mr. Mann's efforts, and characterizes his reports and the volume of abstracts from which we have made these extracts, "as the most extraordinary, and altogether the most valuable collection of documents in regard to common school education that has ever appeared." We are happy to have our opinion of this document confirmed by the Reviewer, who is evidently an experienced committeeman, an accomplished teacher, and an intelligent friend of popular education. We add some extracts from this article.

#### WELL QUALIFIED TEACHERS—NORMAL SCHOOLS.

The great and pressing want,—that in comparison with which most of the others sink into insignificance,—is the want of well-qualified teachers. This indeed is now felt to be the great want of the civilized world. In only one country is it fully supplied; it is only since the beginning of the present century that it has been realized, and any systematic attempt made to supply it. In every state of the American Union, where any one has looked into the condition of the instruction of the great masses of the children, the universal cry is, as in almost all the countries of the old world, "better teachers!"

This want was never so deeply felt in Massachusetts as at this present moment. There is no subject brought so constantly and so prominently before the reader throughout these volumes. In many parts of the state, the standard, by the confession of the committees, is very low, and yet it is impossible to find teachers who can come up to it. There is a mournful uniformity in the tone of the complaints from all quarters upon this point. They come, in great numbers, from nearly every county in the state. We had marked some of these representations to lay before our readers. But they would be only so many repetitions of a perfectly uncontradicted fact. Not a committee thinks its teachers good enough; not one but is aware how much more might be done by perfectly competent teachers.

No more serious question in regard to the schools can be asked, than the question, How is this want to be supplied? It is not enough that better teachers are everywhere in demand. The better teachers are nowhere to be had. It has been supposed that they exist, but are occupied in other pursuits, and that higher wages would call them to the work. This is true in a few instances; but it cannot be in many. In most towns in the commonwealth, the best qualified individuals do actually teach in the winter schools. Those, who have never taught, are usually conscious that they could not teach well without instruction themselves, and are doubtful whether they should succeed; and those, who have had some experience in teaching, have been such teachers as are at present employed, only with a standard less high, and with inferior qualifications. The character of each individual, as a teacher, and his modes of teaching, of arranging classes and studies, and of governing, depend in a great degree upon the character of the schools in which he was himself taught. Teaching is, in many particulars, an art, and, like all other arts, its processes are transmitted from hand to hand. How, then, are better teachers to be formed, to supply this great and increasing demand?

In the first place, it will undoubtedly be found, that in consequence of the greater attention given to the schools, and especially in those districts in which the parents take a strong personal interest, and frequently visit the schools, the present teachers will be improved. Hitherto skill in teaching has been almost exclusively a consequence of personal experience. The teachers have begun entirely ignorant of their art. The good old custom of serving an apprenticeship in teaching has long since passed away, and nothing has yet come in to take

its place. The good teachers have been made such at the expense of experiments upon their pupils. By this process every teacher is improved; and those, who enter upon the work with a hearty desire to excel in it, a genuine love of it, and a peculiar talent for it, will often arrive at excellence.

Then there have been some good books written on the subject of teaching, which will materially aid those who desire to improve themselves. Such are "The Teacher," by Jacob Abbott, "Lectures on School-Keeping," by S. R. Hall, and an excellent little book, "The Teacher Taught," by E. Davis. Many valuable suggestions may be gained from these, and there is evidence, in the volume before us, that they have already done good. The school committee of Middleborough, notice "the schools which have been taught upon the Abbott system" in terms of high commendation, and recommended Mr. Abbott's work to the perusal of teachers. Much valuable instruction is given in the numbers of the "Common School Journal," particularly in the extracts from Palmer's Prize "Essays," an important addition to the school master's library, lately issued from the press. The lectures delivered before the American Institute, now forming ten volumes, contain the suggestions of some of the best thinkers on various matters interesting to the teacher, and often give the fruits of the observation and practical wisdom of veteran instructors. But these, however valuable as helps, cannot serve to form the character of the teacher, any more than a law library, without previous practice or apprenticeship, would form an accomplished lawyer.

Much may be expected from the teachers' meetings. In every instance in which the instructors of a town have associated together, and had regular meetings for discussion, and comparison of opinions and experience, a visible effect of the most beneficial kind has been produced on their schools. Wherever this can be done, therefore, it should be done; and the school committees, so far as lies in their power, should see to it, that neither the fact that the teachers have been strangers to each other, nor distance, nor the shortness of their engagement, should prevent them from meeting together.

By all these means, the teachers may be somewhat, and often very much, improved. But, after all, for the accomplishment of this great object, we must look to the normal schools, and other places for the preparation of teachers. And already the eyes of the friends of the schools are directed thitherward.

The normal schools, whenever mentioned in the returns, are spoken of in terms which show how much is expected from them. As the policy of the legislature in providing for the education of teachers is still, however, sometimes questioned, it may be well to examine some of the evidences and grounds of the opinion, very generally existing in the minds of the friends of education, of the necessity of such a provision, and of the wisdom of giving continued support to a course of measures for the purpose.

The first, we believe, who brought this subject prominently before the public, was the author of "Letters on the Free Schools of New England." These appeared in 1824, and were followed soon after by valuable "Essays" on the subject by the same writer. In 1825, a series of essays appeared in the "Connecticut Observer," and afterwards separately, from the pen of T. H. Gallaudet, late principal of the American Asylum for the education of the Deaf and Dumb, upon a "Plan of a Seminary for the Education of Instructors of Youth." In these, he recommends the project, with a great variety of arguments. At a meeting of the American Institute, held August 29th, 1836, after the subject of "the professional education of teachers" had been discussed, the following resolves were passed; that "the business of teaching should be performed by those who have studied the subject of instruction as a profession," and that "there ought to be at least one seminary in each state, devoted exclusively to the education of teachers."

The qualifications spoken of by the school committees as essential to the character of a good teacher, and which would, by great numbers of them, be considered indispensable, if it were possible to consider the highest qualifications indispensable, and find any teachers for the schools, are such as can only be found, with some rare exceptions, in those who have undergone a specific preparation. To say nothing of the positive acquirements which a teacher should possess, of the familiar acquaintance he should have with arithmetic, with ge-

ography, and with history, interesting facts in which may be thrown in continually in teaching geography, or of the skill he should have in reading and in penmanship; he ought to possess a knowledge of various methods of teaching these branches. Now, this knowledge of methods, of their modes of operation, and of their success, can be acquired only by opportunities of hearing them fully and familiarly discussed, and of seeing them in operation. This might be done by an association of teachers, so situated as to meet together every evening, for months in succession, and have classes of their pupils meet with them. But it can be most successfully done only at a school where the attention can be turned to such points for a long time together, under the superintendence of an able and experienced teacher. There are no branches in which such flagrant deficiencies are felt, and so many improvements are to be made, as in these essentials and staples of the district schools.

A good instructor must have aptness to teach. The want of this is lamented, in multitudes of instances, in persons otherwise possessed of excellent qualities. Aptness to teach is unquestionably a peculiar gift, like a talent for painting or for mechanics. But, like them, it must be perfected by much use, under skillful masters. A moderate talent of this kind, highly cultivated, will be more effectual than great talent without cultivation; which can be given only by exercising the faculty under the eye and guidance of one who can point out failures and suggest the remedy. Where can this be done but in a place of preparation for teachers?

The teacher must have ability to manage and govern. This talent is more rare even than the last mentioned. And although it partly depends on a particular organization, and is found very widely different in different individuals, it can no more spring at once into perfect activity, than the talent for marshalling armies. The talent for governing children to the best end depends chiefly on perfect self control. But when we include in it that directing power which can bring into vigorous action all the powers of a child, keeping the lower in just subordination to the higher, and having in view the greatest permanent good of the individual, it comprehends, in its exercise, a complete knowledge of the character of the pupil, with all the motives and springs of action, for good and for ill. It is needless to say, that a talent, which requires for its full exercise the complete survey of so wide a field, cannot be easily matured. All the helps that can be administered will still leave enough for the individual to do.

It is not easy to overstate the importance of this power of controlling, or the extent of its influence on the future well-being of the pupil. On the susceptible child, on one who is delicately constituted, the influence of the gifted teacher is all but omnipotent. His power to repress the bad, and to stimulate the good tendencies, is almost unbounded. Not only his intentional teachings, but his words, his manners, his looks, the tone of his voice, his smile and his frown, sink into the heart of the child, and control his inmost being. It is a beautiful trait in the character of children, that their sympathy with the exalted and generous qualities is far stronger than with their opposites. The malignant and selfish qualities excite, indeed, but they excite to opposition. They call out corresponding qualities for self-defence. They excite, but it is to aversion and hatred. It would be well, if these feelings could be prevented from going beyond the hateful object; but the evil propensities are blind, and being once excited in a child against an unfeeling, unjust, or selfish teacher, they extend also towards learning, order, discipline, intelligence, refinement,—all the qualities of which the hated individual is supposed to be the representative.

It is apparent, then, that too much attention cannot be given by school committees, in the selection of teachers, to every thing which goes to form the moral character of the candidate; and it is most gratifying to find, that many of the committees are fully aware of the importance of these considerations.

Further, it is obvious that the teacher, in order to be able to accomplish all that he ought, in the performance of his high duties, should be familiar with the elements of the human constitution in its two-fold nature; with the growth of the mind, the nature of the moral sentiments and the mental faculties, and the formation of mental habits; and with the physiology of the body, on the healthfulness of which, the development and energy of the moral and intellectual qualities must

depend. Here are two paths, each leading into wide fields of human knowledge. Can they be traversed without study? Will the unaided sagacity of all who are to teach, direct them to precisely what is most essential in these extensive sciences.

Again, every teacher should be acquainted with the elements of natural science; with something of Natural History, Natural Philosophy, and Chemistry. There is not a day in school, which might not be enlivened by the description of some natural object; there is hardly an hour, during which an occasion does not occur for drawing the attention to some appearance presented, or some process going on, or for giving information of some interesting fact. Most of the children at the common schools are destined to the happy lot of spending their lives in the country. One would think, that a prominent object of elementary education, there at least, should be to make them acquainted with the objects by which they are always to be surrounded. The naturalist finds, in the study of these objects, inexhaustible sources of pleasure; and, though it might be absurd to attempt to make all children naturalists, it would certainly be well to put those who have a taste for such pursuits within reach of these fountains of simple, innocent, and never-ceasing enjoyment. At least, they should have that knowledge of the properties of the objects about them, which would enable them to turn them to some use.

We have enumerated only the most important of the parts of knowledge which should be possessed by the teachers of the common schools, and some of the endowments, for which they should be distinguished. If the union district system should go generally into operation, as we trust it will, a higher class of schools would be created, with more advanced studies, and requiring additional and higher qualifications in the teachers. It is apparent, then, that the normal schools are imperiously called for by the wants of the common schools as they now exist, and are still more essential in view of the great improvements which the system is destined to receive.

#### MULTIPLICITY OF SCHOOL BOOKS.

Another of the greatest and most universal evils, and one, of which the loudest complaints are made in the reports, is the multiplicity of school books. In very many schools, the time of the teacher is frittered away in hearing several classes in the same study, merely because the pupils have not all the same text-books; when, if they were all in one class, the teacher could spend that time in communicating instruction which is now occupied in asking questions and hearing answers. The committee have power to remedy this defect, by selecting the books to be used in schools, and requiring uniformity. But this is a power which they are almost always unwilling to exercise. It can hardly be exercised without giving offence. Yet there is scarcely a matter in which it is so important that an umpire should act. If the choice is left to the parents, they must, almost of necessity, choose different books. If left, as it often is, to the teachers, there can be no uniformity, so long as they are liable to be changed every year, as each successive teacher will have his favorite text-books, which he will require all those, who have no books, to procure.

An effectual remedy would be in requiring the school committee, by a vote of the town, to exercise this power in reference to every school. This might often be done, almost without expense, though not without a little trouble, by selecting a different text-book for each of two or three contiguous schools, and encouraging the exchange of books among those children of the several schools who did not wish to be at the expense of new ones. The evil has been remedied, in some instances, by causing a depository to be formed somewhere in the town for the books recommended by the committee, and furnishing them thus at reduced prices. This is certainly better than the course which is recommended and almost demanded in some of the 'reports,' that the board of education should make the selection. If this were done, many books would be rapidly thrown out of circulation throughout the state. The schools would certainly be, in many instances, great gainers by the loss; but individual authors and publishers would suffer severely, and the schools might eventually suffer from the check upon the freedom of competition in the authors of their future text-books. If the selection be left to the towns, all the books now in use may be continued, without any of the mischievous confusion which now takes place; and the worthless

books be left to die out, as they certainly will, before the searching scrutiny which is now turned upon the schools.

While upon this subject of books used in the schools, we cannot refrain from expressing our earnest desire, that some portion, at least, of the New Testament should always be one. If all the families in the commonwealth were religious, it would be a matter of less importance, though it would then probably be a matter of course. But, as long as there are any children in the schools who may not otherwise become familiar with this volume, we think it ought to be, in some way or other, used in every school. If a portion of it is read to the school each day by the teacher, perhaps, no greater or better use could or need be made of it. But if this is not done, let it be one of the class-books, and, if possible, for the highest class.

#### VALUE OF SCHOOL REGISTERS.

The reports, from beginning to end, are full of evidence of the inestimable value of the school registers. Never before has been brought to view, and in no other way could be brought to view, the vast loss to the people of this commonwealth from irregularity of attendance at school.

The returns show, that out of 124,354, who, during the last year, attended the summer schools, the average absences were 31,656, nearly one fourth; and of 149,222, attending the winter schools, the average absences were, 37,378, still nearly one fourth.

This is an unwelcome statement. One fourth of all the money laid out, and of the time spent by teachers and committees, and, what is of infinitely more consequence, one fourth of all the opportunities presented to the rising generation, lost by irregular attendance! This is enough to wake up all the friends of the schools to a sense of the greatness of the evil, and to the suggestion of means to lessen it.

Much may doubtless be done by arrangements within the school itself. The introduction of music, as one of the exercises, is found always to have this effect. Children are not willing to be absent from the morning song. The same effect is produced by exhibitions of apparatus. Interesting and intelligible conversation, at the beginning of school-hours, questions upon things, the telling or reading a story or description, that all can understand, will do the same. Every thing, in short, which improves the character of the instruction, will attract children to school. Still, much will be left for those to do, whose duty it is made, by the statutes of the commonwealth, to check the evils of irregular and negligent attendance.

#### \*UNION DISTRICT SYSTEM.

We have no doubt, that the plan for the union of district schools, well executed, would be productive of all the good anticipated from it, and much more. The objection on the score of the distance is one only in appearance. The walk would be beneficial in ten instances, where it would be injurious in one. But this objection might be obviated, in some measure, by having only one session in the day. One session, from ten to three o'clock, with one or two short recesses, would, especially in the shortest days, be a great saving of time to teachers and pupils, would secure greater punctuality in those who came from a distance, and would avoid the moral evils of the intermission.

An essential part of this plan is, that the winter district schools, as well as the summer schools, should be taught by females. This is the best kind of instruction for children of both sexes, up to the age of ten or twelve, certainly, and perhaps to the age of fourteen. And we confess we look to the

\*This scheme, recommended by Mr. Mann in his report on school houses, as we have already hinted, contemplates the erection of a central school, equally accessible to four, or more, associated districts, to be provided with a teacher of higher qualifications and employed for a greater length of time, and to be supported by the united action of the districts, with a view to affording a higher order of instruction to children above a certain age; the several district schools to be continued for the benefit of the younger portion of the pupils, under the instruction of females. He has shown, that, by a union of this kind, a higher class of teachers might be employed, and more efficient instruction be given, not only without additional expense, but with a positive saving.

more extensive employment of females, in the schools of the two lower grades, and to the consequent employment of a much smaller number of men, but with much higher qualifications, than heretofore, in the union or town schools, with more confidence of good effects, than to any other improvement on the common school system that has been proposed. The returns before us, with extraordinary unanimity, confirm this view. And let it be remembered, that the conclusions have been formed on the success of female teachers, who, in a great majority of instances, have enjoyed very imperfect advantages of preparation for their office. They have received their whole education at schools, which may indeed sometimes have been good, but which we know must have been, in most instances, poor. What might not the same native talent have accomplished, if aided by the advantages which are now enjoyed at Lexington or at Barre?

Let then the summer schools as now, and the winter district schools, as far and as soon as possible, be taught by females. But let them be qualified for the office. Let the example of Salem be imitated by every town in the commonwealth. By a vote of the city council, the city's share of the dividends of the Massachusetts school fund was

"applied in part to the support, for a year, at the normal school in Lexington, of two young ladies, to be selected from such of the assistants, or older scholars of the east and west female schools, as might need, and would desire to avail themselves of this assistance for the purpose of increasing their qualifications for future service in the public schools. This grant was coupled with stipulations, that the amount advanced should be gradually repaid by a deduction from the salaries to be afterwards allowed them as assistants; so that, in effect, under ordinary circumstances, the grant would prove equivalent to a loan, and would enable the beneficiaries, without apprehension, to anticipate their own recourses, and leave it in the power of the committee to continue to provide for the same object by the use of the same means."—*Massachusetts School Returns*. p. 39.

If this cannot be done for two females, let it be for one; and, if not for a year, let it be for a single term. The expenses of a residence at Lexington or Barre are so very moderate, that there are very few towns in the state which might not support a teacher there, for one term each year, by means of its portion of the dividends, of the school fund. Let the directors of the normal schools, make a regulation, that a female, sent by any of the towns, shall be entitled to leave the institution at the end of one quarter, if the town desire it. We believe, that three years would be most profitably spent, by any female teacher in the commonwealth, at the normal schools, as they are now conducted. But yet we are confident, that, in the case of those who have had experience in teaching, the opportunity of seeing the right management of a school, and the right mode of teaching, even for a single quarter, would be an important benefit. Let the most successful teacher be selected, the individual most familiar with the studies and most apt to teach, most heartily engaged in teaching, and most desirous of devoting herself to it till death or marriage. When she returns and resumes her school, let the other female teachers of the town have the advantage of visiting her school, and observing her methods. Such a visit of but half a day, even if repeated but a few times, would often give an improved aspect to the interior of a school. Let the female teachers be encouraged to associate for mutual improvement, and make the experience and skill of each a common fund for the benefit of all. Let the school committees arrange and bring about these meetings. Let them attend them, and take part in them. What admirable lectures upon instruction would many of the authors of these reports make. Some members of the committees have been teachers themselves; they have long observed the defects of the schools; they have more or less distinct ideas of their remedies, and of a higher and more efficient system than they have ever seen in operation. Let them bring these cherished fancies out, and, catching zeal from the eager interest of the young and ardent female teachers, whom they will assemble about them, let them plan better schools and better modes of teaching, and urge the teachers to self-cultivation, and stir up the sympathy of the parents in their cause.

The union district system would establish three grades of schools for all the towns in the state except about ten of the smallest; the summer schools, the district winter schools, and

the union, central, or town schools. The two lower grades would remain as now, except that they would be necessarily improved by the action of the central school. In each town there might be one central school, as proposed in Goshen, a town of less than six hundred inhabitants; or two, according to the suggestion from Westhampton, a town of less than nine hundred; or more, in proportion to the size and convenience of the towns.

Of the numerous advantages, that would follow from this gradation of schools, we shall briefly notice some of the most striking.

One would be the establishment of a gradation of studies. Each class of schools should have certain studies peculiar to itself, an acquaintance with which should be requisite for entering the next higher. This would be a great gain. Nothing is more exciting, or more innocently so, than the expectation of an examination, with something real dependent upon it. The requisite for admission to the summer district school should be four years of age. This is insisted upon by some of the committees, and with great reason. Little is gained by sending children very early to school. They are thus, it is true, out of their parents' way, but not so completely out of harm's way as is usually thought. They are seriously in the way of the improvement of the elder pupils. Very little attention can be given to them, and they are, therefore, in great danger of forming habits of idleness, inattention, and mischief-making in school, of which they cannot afterwards be easily cured.

The requisites for admission to the winter district schools might be seven years of age, and an examination, the character of which should be settled by the school committee. The branches pursued at these schools might be those now taught, together with music, and the elements of natural history, to a specified extent, so as to have a clear line of distinction between these and the union schools.

Schools of the highest grade might be open to none under ten years of age, and to those over that age only after a satisfactory examination in the proper studies of the district schools, with a dispensing power in the committee, to cover extraordinary cases. By these exclusions, space would be left for a much wider range of studies, including, after arithmetic and geography, drawing, geometry, chemistry, natural history, book-keeping, natural philosophy, astronomy, the history of the United States and general history, surveying, social and civil duties, the elements of politics, grammar, rhetoric, and, where it is desirable, the course of studies required for admission to the colleges. Music ought to be a part of the pursuits of each school.

Another great advantage of this gradation of schools, would be the saving of time, by bringing together children of nearly equal powers and progress; thus enlarging the classes and diminishing their number, making room for additional studies, and giving more time for teaching. A class of twenty may be as easily and as well taught in a given time, as one of five.

The last advantage that we should notice, and by far the greatest, is the way thus opened for making teaching a profession. Many intelligent females, in almost every town and village, would rejoice in the opportunity of devoting themselves for life to the business of instruction. Under the proposed change, they might be employed, winter and summer, as many as eight or nine months, even in the smallest towns, and, in the larger, ten; a length of time, beyond which no teacher ought to be occupied for years in succession. In this way, and in this way only, perhaps, will a regular profession of teachers, male and female, grow up for the whole state. Under the present system, the smaller towns cannot expect to have a male teacher of the highest qualifications, except by accident.

Under the proposed arrangement, by adopting an excellent suggestion of the committee of Wareham, some of the best teachers might be secured even to those union or district schools, that could be kept for only four or five months.

"We think we hazard nothing in saying, that it would be better for all parties concerned, if we should employ the most competent teachers the whole year, and let them pass from district to district until the year came round, giving to each district its just proportion of time. In this way, a male teacher might be employed in each district a suitable time, and a female in the same district another portion of time. A few

teachers of superior quality might thus keep all our schools."—*Abstract of School Returns, for 1839-40*, p. 438.

We can conceive of few situations more honorable, and, for one who could enter upon the work with that ardent and unaffected love of it, which constitutes the highest qualification, more truly desirable, than that of a permanent teacher of one of these union schools. A man of the highest order of attainments, under the influence of a sentiment of duty, might be happy in such a place.

The secretary, in his second report, says;

"The time spent by the scholars in reading, from the age of eight or ten to sixteen years, is amply sufficient to enrich their minds with a great amount of various and useful knowledge, without encroaching one hour upon other accustomed studies."—*Secretary's Second Report*, p. 43.

We should be willing to use still stronger language. The union district system, if well executed, as there is every reason to believe it will soon be in many towns, and we hope eventually in all, will give instruction to children from the age of four to sixteen, and, if desirable, to a more advanced age, for eight or nine months of the year. And this, as we have already said, is enough. We have no doubt, that more of every kind of useful knowledge may be acquired, and more thorough discipline given, to all the powers of the mind in nine months, than in twelve. For the perfect development of the powers of the body, and the confirmation of a vigorous and healthy constitution, the shorter period of study is, of course, vastly more desirable. Whoever considers, how many hours of every day in the year are usually lost in listlessness by the jaded pupil of the year-long school, and compares this with the freshness and cheerful alacrity of spirit with which the child comes to his studies, who has been enjoying, for some months, the freedom and open-air exercise of a country life, will be disposed to agree with us. No one, who has had the opportunity, can have failed to observe, how the mind, with the body, of the boy, condemned to toil on through the summer at a city school, has yielded and bent under the burden; how the ruddy cheek has grown pale, and the elastic step heavy; how the gay and careless playfulness of spirit, which had made light of tasks, has been gradually exchanged for a listless and plodding fidelity, like the dogged pertinacity of an office-drudge; how completely all the happy buoyancy of childhood has been quelled long before the coming of the brief August vacation. Another, under a better system or a happier fortune, is sent off into the country when the sultry days first come on, there to ride, and make hay, and gather flowers, and catch fish, or do—what is most absurdly called doing nothing,—to wander about, at will, over hill and dale, looking at all things growing and living, and learning how the country people live. Mark the difference of the two, when the studies begin, at the autumn schools. What is more to the purpose, mark the difference at the end of half a dozen years, and there will be no question about the equal scholarship, and far better character of body, mind, and moral nature, of the child grown up to manhood, who has been allowed to yield to impulses of nature, and enjoy the summer, as the author of the summer and the country intended it should be enjoyed.

We say, therefore, that nine, or at farthest ten, months of schooling in a year, are enough for any part of the state and any age of the pupils. And we believe, that the adoption of the union district system, and the substitution of female for male teachers in the smaller districts, will secure a school for that number of months for nearly every district in the state.

#### NEW YORK.

*Report of the Superintendent of Common Schools in New York, made in April 1840, transmitting abstracts of the Report of the county visitors appointed by him.* p. 185.

This is not the annual report required by law of the superintendent, but for all practical purposes, and especially to one who would become acquainted with the actual working of the common school system, it possesses a higher value and interest, valuable and interesting as that series of reports has been. It is the only report which has thrown much light on the actual condition of the schools themselves. While other official documents have been confined mainly to a few

general facts relating to the organization, attendance and expenditure of the system, and these in respect to attendance\* of the most fallacious character; these reports embrace a mass of facts relative to school houses, school attendance, teachers, official inspection, parental co-operation, libraries, together with plans and suggestions of improvement ascertained from actual inspection of more than 1800 schools, in different towns in every section of the state, by men selected by the superintendent, for their known interest and experience in education, who have performed this service gratuitously. The facts thus obtained, show that the common schools of New York labor substantially under the same defects and difficulties which go to impair their usefulness in Connecticut and Massachusetts.

The system of inspection, by which this important information has been obtained, is a novel but valuable feature in the present school law of New York. The superintendent propo-

\*For instance in 1835, the number of children taught in the school districts, making returns, is stated to be 541,401, and the number over 4 and under 16 in the same districts, to be 540,285; in 1836, the former number is stated to be 532,167, and the latter 538,398; in 1837, the former, 524,188, and the latter 536,892; in 1838, the former, 528,913 and the latter 539,747; in 1839, the former, 557,229, and the latter 564,790. Now either New-York has the most successful system of public schools in the world, or there is an error in the elements, or the mode of obtaining the above results. A writer in a late number of the Connecticut Courant, has the following remarks on a paragraph of Governor Seward's late message:—

#### NEW YORK SCHOOL SYSTEM.

"A paragraph in Governor Seward's late message to the legislature of New York, relative to the number of children attending the common schools, is going the rounds of the public papers, which indicates a much more favorable state of things, than we supposed prevailed in that or any other state. The whole number of children between five and sixteen is said to be about 600,000, and the number attending the common schools, to be 570,000. These numbers we presume are given on the authority of the returns made to the superintendent of common schools for the past year. Now, unless these returns are made out more accurately than the results given in former reports of the superintendent would seem to indicate, any conclusions drawn from them must be very fallacious. Thus in the last very able report of the superintendent, the number of children over four and under sixteen, is stated to be 564,790; and the number instructed the year previous in the common schools, to be 557,229, leaving only 7,561, to be in private schools, or in no school public or private. By looking at the tables, (and this is acknowledged in the report,) it will be seen that in the former aggregate, 55,000 children in the city of New York are not included, which will make a difference of over 62,000, instead of 7,561, between the enumeration, and the school attendance. If this omission is made for the last year, it will make a difference of 85,000, instead of 30,000, in the same comparison. By looking further into the statistics accompanying the report of the superintendent for 1840, it appears that in 14 counties alone, there were more than 22,000 children returned as taught during the year in the common schools of those counties, than there were children between the ages of four and sixteen—leaving none to be educated in academies or private schools.

Again, in the cities and large towns, of New York, Albany, Utica, Buffalo, Rochester, Brooklyn, Troy and Poughkeepsie, there were 44,000 children returned as between the ages of four and sixteen, more than were in the common schools during the year.

Again, during the same year, it was stated in an official document of the public school society of New York city, that there were over 21,000 children in that city alone, who were in no school public or private.

Again, it is well known, that flourishing private schools of every name and nature are to be found in all the large towns of the state, and if we may calculate in as large a proportionate attendance on them, as has been ascertained to be the case in Connecticut and Massachusetts, there cannot be less than 60,000 children under 16 years of age who are thus receiving instruction, elsewhere than in the common schools.

In the same message Governor Seward refers to the late census, as showing that there are 43,871 white persons over the age of 20, who cannot read or write, and that the number of children now growing up in the same manner does not fall short of 30,000.

Reference to these facts is here made, simply to elicit information and explanation from those who are entrusted with the administration of the school system of New York—a system which yields to none other in the comprehensiveness of its aims, the liberality of its appropriations, and the vigor of its administration."

ses to extend it to the counties and towns where it has not yet been in operation. He has likewise proposed in the draft of a bill for a public act relating to schools, the appointment of county superintendents, which will give increased efficiency to the entire administration of the system.

We subjoin copious extracts from the report of the superintendent, in which he gives a summary of the communication of the inspectors, both as to the existing state of things and proposed remedies.

#### SCHOOL-HOUSES AND APPURTENANCES.

In a great majority of the districts visited, there appears to be great defects in the dimensions and construction of the school-houses. Most of them are framed wooden buildings, of one story, and about 20 by 22 feet in dimensions; sometimes 22 by 24 and 25, with one room only; generally opening from the street, although in many instances there are small entries, and recesses to deposit wood and children's clothing. Several districts have log houses only. In some districts, school-houses are built upon a more liberal and enlarged plan, and much better adapted to the convenience and accommodation of the scholars; frequently of brick and stone; and occasionally with two stories, with suitable rooms for the accommodation of two departments; from 25 to 30, by 40 and 45 feet in dimensions.

In general, sufficient attention is not paid to keeping the school houses in repair.

They are with very few exceptions pleasantly located, and in situations retired from noise and disturbance. A very large proportion of them, and particularly those of modern construction, are furnished with convenient and sometimes spacious play grounds for the children. Some of these are handsomely enclosed and ornamented with shrubbery. The majority of the districts, however, are deficient in this respect, as well as in suitable privy accommodations for both sexes. Nearly all the districts are without wood-houses.

#### SCHOOL ROOMS AND FURNITURE.

As before observed, most of the districts have but one room, and that of too contracted dimensions for the convenient accommodation of the scholars. The arrangement of the seats and desks is generally very bad, seldom adapted to the different sizes of those occupying and using them; the former often without backs, and the latter consisting of smooth boards attached to the wall in such a manner that the pupils when writing or engaged in their studies sit with their backs to the teacher. Sometimes, however, the desks are arranged so as to enable the pupils to face the teacher, furnishing perpendicular backs to the seats of the smaller scholars in front, rendering their position still more uneasy, if possible, than when deprived of any backs to their seats. In the school-houses of modern construction, the desks are arranged in parallel rows, with aisles between, generally with from two to four seats and desks in a tier. These are found very convenient, and well adapted to the purposes for which they are designed. The division of the schools into separate departments, the one for males and the other for females, is found to be attended with great advantage; and in many of the districts a female assistant is employed to take charge of the smaller scholars exclusively, leaving those more advanced, under the instruction of the principal teacher.

Very few districts have any other means of ventilating the school-rooms, than by doors and raising the lower sashes of the windows. In those of modern construction, however, the upper sashes are prepared for this purpose. As the rooms are generally warmed by means of stoves, the presence of from thirty to fifty children, for three hours at a time, in a contracted space, and without any means for the admission of air except by exposure to sudden and cold currents, it is obvious, must be very injurious to health.

The means of obtaining fresh water were generally found convenient, though in most instances procured only from the pumps and wells of the neighbors. Most of the districts are furnished with pails and cups.

#### INSPECTION OF THE SCHOOLS.

The visitors concur in representing the inspectors chosen at the town meetings as being generally not well qualified for that particular duty, and as being very remiss in its performance. It has already been shown to the Legislature, from the

official returns, that at least one half of all the schools in the State are not visited at all by the inspectors. The reports of the visitors show, that the examinations of the inspectors are slight and superficial, and that no benefit is derived from them.

#### TEACHERS.

There is a great deficiency in the qualifications of the teachers generally, and in their modes of instruction. This deficiency arises in a great measure, perhaps, from the want of interest on the part of the inhabitants of the district in the welfare and progress of the schools, and from their unwillingness to provide sufficient inducements to command the services of competent teachers; the average compensation to male teachers not exceeding \$20, and female teachers \$10 per month. The want of Normal schools in a sufficient number to supply the demand for good teachers, is also felt as a serious evil; the absence of a thorough and efficient system of inspection and visitation; the short periods for which teachers are generally employed, seldom extending beyond a single term; the want of experience on the part of the teachers, most of whom are young men, many of them resorting to this employment as a means of temporary support during the prosecution of professional and other studies; the variety of systems of teaching, and the constant changes in such systems, resulting from the changes in the teachers; the great diversity of text books, and the consequent difficulty of proper classification; all combine to render the schools comparatively inefficient, and to obstruct the progress of the scholars in their studies. The consequence is, that in many of the districts, select schools are established and supported by individual effort, to the serious detriment of the common schools.

#### LIBRARIES.

In most of the districts which have been visited, the libraries were found to be in operation, and the borrowers numerous.

#### SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF VISITERS, WITH REMARKS BY SUPERINTENDENT.

##### 1. The abolition of the office of town inspector.

The Superintendent is constrained to express his concurrence in the opinion expressed by several of the boards of visitors, that the office of town inspector of schools is unnecessary, and rather an incumbrance on the administration of the system. Although some of them are exact and faithful in the examination of teachers, yet, generally speaking, they are too accommodating to the wishes of trustees and inhabitants of districts, in granting certificates of qualification to incompetent teachers, whose chief recommendation consists in the cheap terms upon which they are willing to be employed.

##### 2. The appointment of deputy superintendents for each county.

It is believed that this would have a beneficial effect upon every branch of the administration of the common school system. It would be idle to expatiate on the advantages of personal attention to the schools by an officer specially employed for that purpose. The number of districts in a county would generally afford sufficient employment for one person, and there would be few instances in which more than one would be necessary. He could personally visit the schools, give counsel and instruction as to their management, discover and correct errors, animate the exertions of teachers, trustees and inhabitants, and impart vigor to the whole system. He should be authorized to annul the license of any incompetent teacher, subject to an appeal to the State Superintendent. As to the mode of his appointment, the whole utility of the scheme would depend upon his being responsible to another tribunal, and yet independent of those fluctuations which would attend any mode of election. The compensation might be regulated by the Legislature, founded on the number of school districts in the county. As to the mode of paying the compensation it might be made a county charge, either wholly or in part; and if in part, a portion of it might be supplied from the surplus revenue of the United States Deposit Fund.

##### 3. Normal schools in each county for the instruction and preparation of teachers.

The present system of departments for common school

teachers in our academies furnishes the opportunity for the desired instruction to those who wish to obtain it, at a much cheaper rate than could be done by separate schools. The academies are thus aided, and the money appropriated to them is at all events well bestowed. The pupils actually acquire, in the common and ordinary course of instruction which they furnish, the kind of knowledge which is to qualify them to be teachers. It is a mistake to suppose that they would acquire more, or any different qualifications in Normal schools, except the theory and practice of instruction.\* These may as well be taught in the academies as elsewhere, if not better. Their principals are always men who have long been engaged in the business of teaching, and who are most capable of imparting information on the subject.

##### 4. The establishment of a Journal exclusively devoted to the promotion of education.

The Superintendent has already in his annual report expressed himself so decidedly and anxiously on this subject, that it is only necessary to refer to what has already been said, and to add the confirmation of his views by the boards of visitors who have noticed the matter.

##### 5. Uniformity of class books, to be attained by the books being selected by some authority.

This uniformity is very desirable, so as to prevent the great variety of books found in schools, on the one hand or on the other, the expense of buying new books, with every new teacher. It is difficult to decide which of these is the greatest evil. A variety of books containing reading lessons, or of grammars, arithmetics, &c., necessarily compels the creation of as many distinct classes as there are different books; and thus the time of the teacher, which could have been as beneficially employed in attending to one class of six, eight or ten scholars, is wasted upon six, eight, or ten individuals in the same study, and none of them receive a proper degree of attention. This is an evil of the greatest magnitude. On the other hand, the purchase every year or two of a complete set of books for a number of children, would be intolerable; and yet it is feared from past experience, that our fellow-citizens would be unwilling to submit to the prescription by law or under its authority, of any school books to be used by their children. Authors, publishers and booksellers, interested in producing the greatest variety, would sound an alarm that would be echoed from every part of the State.

The only remedy that has occurred to the Superintendent, is in the organization of some general society, whose members will devote themselves to the selection of the very best books that can be found; recommend their use; and induce some enterprising publisher to issue large editions at such low prices as to drive out of the market most, if not all others. In time, the cheapness, if not the merits of the books, would bring them into general use, with the voluntary assent of parents, teachers and trustees. There is an ample field for selection, not only from productions of our own country, but from those of other countries. Among others, the National School Society of Ireland has issued a very excellent series of text books, which are in use in the schools of that country.

##### 6. Vaccination of the children attending schools.

Some provision on this subject would certainly be useful. But it is doubted whether any legal requisition would be effectual. The mildest form in which legislative interposition could be had, would be by authorizing school district meetings in their discretion to raise a sufficient sum by tax, to vaccinate every pupil who had not been vaccinated or had the small pox. A school room is the very place where the small pox is the most likely to break out and to prove most disastrous.

##### 7. The teaching of vocal music in the schools.

This has been strenuously urged by some of the most intelligent of our citizens, not only for the purpose of imparting a knowledge of its principles, strengthening the lungs and chest, and improving the voice, but as a means of discipline; and a school in the city of Albany is referred to as affording

\*These are the qualifications which are most requisite, and in which the visitors all concur in representing existing teachers as most deficient. We do not see how those who attend the department for teachers, as at present organized, can acquire them. These departments can be made Normal schools, and we hope will be so made.—Ed.

a signal proof of its efficacy in that respect. But it is the opinion of the Superintendent, that the introduction of this subject into the schools can be accomplished only by the force of recommendation and example, and that it is beyond the sphere of legislation. So far as the strong recommendation of this department can be useful, it shall not be wanting.

8. *Uniformity in the mode of employing and paying teachers.*

It is not believed that any legislation on this subject is necessary.

9. *The re-building of school-houses, and making them better adapted to the comfort and health of the pupils, the providing of play grounds and other accommodations.*

It is believed that for the present, at least, these improvements must be left to the intelligence and public spirit of the inhabitants of the districts.

10. *Power in districts to raise money by tax, to a limited amount, to purchase school apparatus, such as maps, plain globes, &c.*

It is believed that such authority may be safely given, and that its exercise would be salutary.

11. *Provision that the tuition of indigent children shall be defrayed by a tax on the district generally, instead of those only who send children to school.*

The Superintendent has long been deeply impressed with the injustice of the present system in this respect. Parents who are scarcely able to pay for the clothing, school books and tuition of their own children, are now compelled to make up the deficiency in the teacher's wages caused by the exemption of the indigent. The inevitable consequence is, to drive from the school the children of those who feel unable or indisposed to bear this additional and unequal burden. If, as the provision admits, it be proper to educate the children of the indigent at the expense of others, it must be on the ground of public policy or common interest, and then, like all other burthens, for a public purpose, this should fall upon the community at large. The only answer that has been given, is that the distribution of public money to a district compensates for the burden imposed, by diminishing the amount which would otherwise be paid. But the object of distributing the public money is a general and public one, and it is founded on the principle that a great public good is to be attained. Neither its objects or its benefits are confined to those who pay for the tuition of their children, but pervade the whole land, and include every citizen. The object of educating the indigent is equally extensive, and its burthens should be commensurate with its benefits, and should not fall on any one class, who are thus in effect taxed for the benefit of the whole. There seems, therefore, to be a fallacy in the answer referred to. It assumes what the law never intended, that the public bounty should remunerate those who pay for the exempt, and it mistakes the principle on which that bounty is bestowed. Those who are thus taxed, derive no peculiar benefit from this bounty, but all receive its advantages in the education and improvement of the poor. Besides, in many cases, it must happen that the amount of tuition, for the payment of which the indigent are exempted, exceeds the sum apportioned to the district. One effect of the present system, undeniably, is to reduce and limit the range of exemption. The trustees who are to make it, are generally, if not universally, among those who send children to school; and they are thus called upon to put their hands into their own pockets for a public purpose. Upon no one subject in the whole administration of the school law, have the complaints been so strong and so numerous as upon this; and from some of the country visitors, the representation of its inequality, injustice and injurious consequences, have been ardent and decided. The Superintendent, therefore, unhesitatingly recommends, that the tuition chargeable to the children of indigent parents, be raised by tax in the same manner as the repairs of school-houses are defrayed; and that the trustees be authorized to exempt from the payment of a specified portion of the tuition charges, as well as from the whole. There are many persons, in indigent circumstances, who are still able to defray a portion of the charges for the education of their children; and there are others who, from proper considerations of self-respect, would prefer paying a part of such expenses, rather than be indebted

for the whole to the public bounty. Such a discrimination would often be an act of justice to the district.

12. *A provision by which trustees should be elected for a longer term, and so that one only should go out of office in each year.*

The experience of this office commends this suggestion as a very valuable one. When an entirely new set of trustees come into office they are ignorant of and find it extremely difficult to become acquainted with the contracts and arrangements of their predecessors, and particularly with the state of their accounts. The business of the district is frequently deranged, and conflicts between the old and new trustees are not uncommon, in consequence of the latter not knowing the grounds and reasons of the previous arrangements of the former. A year's acquaintance with the duties of the office gives the incumbent much greater facilities in the discharge of them. While the board would be thus renovated whenever circumstances required it, there would remain information, experience and intelligence to continue a system; and thus the petty broils that disturb a district and which are fed by the expectation of change, would cease for the want of opportunity.

The same remarks are applicable in a great degree to the election of commissioners.

13. *The establishment of county boards of education, and of town, county and State associations for the improvement of common school education.*

Such associations will doubtless be of great value. Their formation, however, must be voluntary, by the enlightened and patriotic who feel the deep importance of the subject.

14. *The establishment in cities and populous places of schools of different grades under the charge of a local superintendent.*

The trustees of districts have now full authority to establish schools of any grade or grades in their respective districts. But as one district might not be able alone to maintain a school of high grade, it might be useful to allow several districts to unite for such a purpose. A local superintendent has been created in the city of Buffalo, and judging from the reports of the schools in that city, as well as from other sources of information, it is believed that the plan has been eminently successful.

The following passages are from a petition of citizens of Onondaga county, praying for an alteration in the common school system, read in the house of Representatives, January 18, 1841.

We ask for an efficient organization; and believing that to be impossible under incompetent or inefficient boards of inspectors, we respectfully suggest their abolition, and the appointment of a county inspector or superintendent, in their stead.

Whether this superintendent be appointed by the Regents, the Supervisors, the state Superintendent, or the people at large, is of far less importance than any further delay in establishing the office. Such an officer in each county, devoting all his time and abilities to the improvement of the schools, will accomplish more than an army of uncompensated and unhonored inspectors. What is good will be diffused, what is evil will be remedied; public interest will be awakened—opinion informed—our munificent fund will be effectively applied—the libraries protected, and those schools honored which are now neglected, if not despised.

*Lecture on Education.—By Horace Mann, Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, p. 62.*

This valuable lecture, was the first of the series which Mr. Mann prepared and delivered in his annual circuit of county conventions. We published an extract from it in number five of the Journal, on "the importance of visible illustration in common schools," which from some oversight was not credited to him. We have marked other passages for future insertion.

We have also received the annual reports of the proper authorities, respecting public schools in New York city, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Louisville, Lancaster, Buffalo, Boston, Portland, Lowell, Salem, Nantucket, Providence and other cities and larger towns, to which we shall devote a subsequent number of the Journal. It is in such towns and cities in Connecticut, that there is the greatest room, and necessity for immediate improvement in our mode of supporting and conducting public schools.